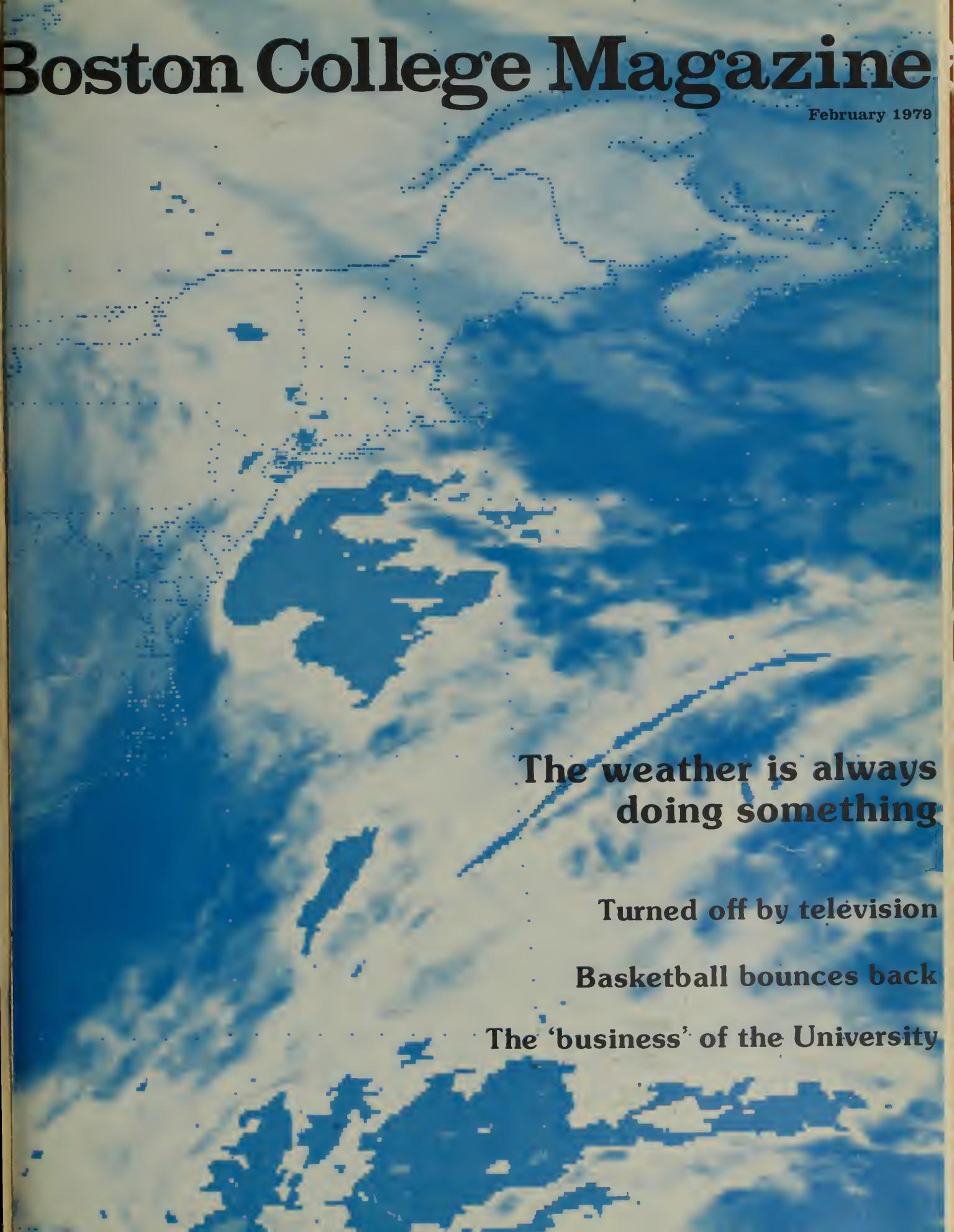


Boston College Magazine

February 1979



The weather is always
doing something

Turned off by television

Basketball bounces back

The 'business' of the University



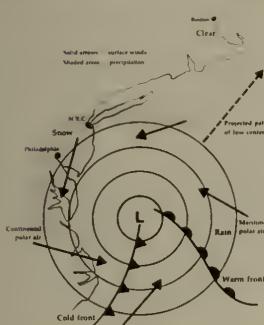
Women's basketball action against Northeastern. An introduction to the coaches of the men's and women's teams begins on page 18.

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Cover photo: A computer-drawn representation of the temperature gradients in the New England area a short time before the Feb. 7-8 snow 'blitz.' The darker the area, the colder the temperature. Photo, courtesy U.S. National Weather Service.

Photo credits: All photographs by Lee Pellegrini, with the exception of pages 5, 9 (Bill McDonald) and page 10 (Kevin Sharp, The Heights). Illustration, page 4, by Carol Davis.

Up front

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Boston College Magazine is published three times annually by the Office of Public Relations, Boston College, and is distributed free of charge to University alumni, parents of undergraduate students, and Faculty and staff. Editorial offices are maintained at Lawrence House, Boston College, 122 College Road, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167, telephone (617) 969-0198. Copyright © 1979, Office of Public Relations, Boston College. All publication rights reserved.

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There is a sumptuous variety about the New England weather that compels the stranger's admiration — and regret. The weather is always doing something there. . . .

Mark Twain, 1876

The snowstorm of February 1978 was an example of New England weather's "sumptuous variety" that most residents would prefer not to have sampled. It was, however, just the kind of storm that has made weather forecasting in this region an art as much as a science. One Boston meteorologist, barely four hours before the February storm arrived in earnest, still refused to commit himself to a prediction of snow in any appreciable amount. It is, I suppose, a public acknowledgement of the vagaries of weather here that the same meteorologist remains a respected forecaster.

Another respected weather forecaster, although he is more likely to refer to conditions in the next decade than to make predictions about the coming weekend, is **Edward M. Brooks**, Professor of Geology and Geophysics. His article on the physical conditions that cause and affect snowstorms begins on page 10. The analysis of statistical possibilities for 1980 that Prof. Brooks also provides in his article is not especially comforting to those of us who neither own a snowblower nor have a strapping 15-year-old.

A native of New Haven, Prof. Brooks is a graduate of Harvard College and holds master's and doctoral degrees in meteorology from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Before joining the faculty here in 1965, he taught at M.I.T. and St. Louis University and served as a consultant for several commercial firms, including Geophysics Corporation of America. He is the author of more than 100 articles in his field.

The 62-year-old Newton resident and his wife are the parents of eight — four sons and four daughters. Prof. Brooks is an avid pianist and, I'm happy to note, a very cooperative author.

Whether television is a "vast wasteland" or not, its impact is indeed enormous. Three University alumni, all of whom have distinguished positions related to the television medium, talked about problems in television and offered their opinions on how improvements could be made in a panel conducted at the

fifth annual Alumni Senate Nov. 18. Excerpts from the panelists' remarks begin on page 4. The panelists were:

Anthony J. LaCamera, '34, who retired in December after more than 40 years as a journalist and 30 years as radio-television editor and columnist for the Boston *Record-American* and *Herald-Traveler*. LaCamera, winner of the Christopher Award and several times judge for distinguished television awards, is now lecturing and writing and also serving as chairman of the communications/publications committee of the B.C. Alumni Board.

Joseph C. Damino, '63, general manager of WSBK, Channel 38, in Boston. Channel 38 is the flagship of Storer Broadcasting and one of the major non-network stations in the country. Damino was named general manager two years ago, after serving as national sales and station manager for eight years. He is a member of the University public relations office's advisory council.

Charles D. Ferris, '54, J.D. '61, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, the national regulatory agency with responsibility for the television and radio media. Ferris served for many years as counsel to former Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., '36, before being nominated to and approved for the F.C.C. post in 1977. He was presented an honorary degree by the University at the 1978 Commencement, at which he was speaker.

The resurgence of Eagle basketball is one of the more pleasant sports stories at B.C. Coach Tom Davis is the foremost reason for the turnaround in hoop fortunes and Len DeLuca provides a profile of the coach, now in his second season here, beginning on page 18. We also present an introduction to the new coach of the women's basketball team, Carol Swindler, who has also breathed new life into a faltering program.

Len DeLuca, '74, J.D. '77, has been the voice of B.C. basketball for the past eight years, broadcasting games over local radio stations. A former sports editor of *The Heights* and reporter with C.B.S. and WEEI radio in Boston, DeLuca is an associate with the Boston law firm of Crane & Inker.

B.M.



Growing up almost Irish

From the early '40s to the mid-50's I was busy growing up in Albany, N.Y. The first home I remember was in a section of that city known as Arbor Hill, an area populated by Irish-American families like mine. My mother, too, had grown up in Arbor Hill, and, like her mother before her, she entrusted the early education of her three children to the Sisters of Mercy at St. Patrick's on Central Avenue.

The school would have to be described as dreary by even the most liberal esthetic standards. Our playground was a sunless asphalt alley between the church and school. The classrooms were gloomy, their furnishings having achieved antique status even before my mother's school days, and the discipline was strict. We marched out of school at the end of the day in silent single file to the tunes of a hand-cranked Victrola on the second floor landing.

The brogue was no stranger to us even if we did not hear it at home. Some of the good Sisters at St. Patrick's who had been born in Ireland had never lost the lilt of their homeland from their speech. The Sisters of Mercy were, indeed, an Irish foundation, and we children were conversant in the history of the order and the life of its foundress, Mother Mary Catherine McAuley. Beyond that, our exposure to Irish history was limited to snatches of information about "the famine" and "the uprising" passed on by the nuns with hair-raising detail that was matched only in their stories of the martyrs and their realistic descriptions of what Hell was going to be like for some of us.

Conceding classroom stardom to the girls, we boys sought our limelight in the church next door, where an aspiring altar boy did basic training in the choir. Even the least talented felt a sense of accomplishment in those days of the genuinely high High Mass. We loved it all — the mystery, the music, the Latin, the processions, pageantry and incense, and the speculation about which of us would be the first to faint at a midnight Mass. For my mother's part, her regular Saturday chore of washing, bluing, starching and ironing surplices for my brother and me made her one of the earliest and most avid fans of permanent-press fabrics.

There were times at St. Patrick's when we felt very Irish — on St. Patrick's Day, for example, when even the nuns and the pastor sported a touch of green, or at assemblies when we ripped into a stirring rendition of "Hibernian Champion Saint, All Hail!" Patriotism was highly esteemed there, and the nuns constantly reminded us that we were Americans first and foremost, but we were happily and compatibly Irish-Americans.

My St. Patrick's days ended when my father's upward mobility took our family across town to the Pine Hills section and St. Vincent dePaul parish. I have only recently begun to appreciate that event as a turning point in my life.

I expected the new school, Vincentian Institute, to be different. I wasn't disappointed. The school was a modern ranch-style building surrounded by what seemed to be acres of grass and trees. Most amazing of all was the greenhouse structure, a vestige of the estate that once occupied the site, that housed the primary grades. It was called "the glass school," and the theory seemed to be that youngsters could enjoy the benefits of the sun while they learned. Naturally, some accommodation had to be made if children were to function in an atmosphere more hospitable to orchids than people. Consequently, the year-round

dress for little girls in the glass school was a white, sleeveless sundress (at a time when high school girls were still wearing prom gowns with sleeves). Boys wore short-sleeved white shirts and short pants (an indignity that fifth-grade status spared me), and everyone, including the nuns, wore sunglasses in the classroom. It all seemed rather Hollywood to me.

St. Vincent's was the parish from which boys were chosen to serve the Bishop of Albany in the private chapel at his residence. My brother John and I made the altar boys' major leagues when the nuns chose us to be one of the serving teams.

Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons was already the oldest active prelate in the United States when we first met him. He called us "James and John, the Sons of Zebedee, the Sons of Thunder" after the apostles of the same names. We never knew why he took a shine to us. There were, in fact, two other brothers who served Mass for him, and they were a matched set of twins. Nevertheless, Bishop Gibbons was a saintly, patient man who seemed to enjoy the exuberance of "his boys" and put up with their boyish shenanigans. Each morning that we served Mass, for instance, my brother and I would carefully scuff our feet along the carpeting as we walked from the convent wing of the residence to the Bishop's chapel. When we met the Bishop at the foot of the staircase as he came down from his apartment, he would extend his hand to each of us for the traditional kissing of the episcopal ring and be rewarded with shocks of discharged static electricity. On a good day, the sparks were visible — lightning from the Sons of Thunder.

About that time, I began to give serious thought to sainthood. I immediately ruled out the path of martyrdom as impractical at best and took the only other approach I could think of — career education. I read every book about saints that I could find in the children's section of the Pine Hills library, and when I had exhausted that material, I convinced a sympathetic librarian to give me access to the adult section. The effort didn't produce the result I hoped for, but it left me with a store of exotic information unexcelled in my age group.

One morning after Mass, Bishop Gibbons took my brother and me into his study to see a woodcarving he had commissioned for the new seminary.

"Do you know what saint that is?" he asked us.

"St. Theresa," I replied.

"Which St. Theresa?" he asked — a trick question because both St. Theresas were Carmelites and wore the same religious garb.

"St. Theresa of Avila," I told him with certainty.

"How do you know?" he persisted.

"She's holding a book and a pen," I replied. "She was a mystic and a writer."

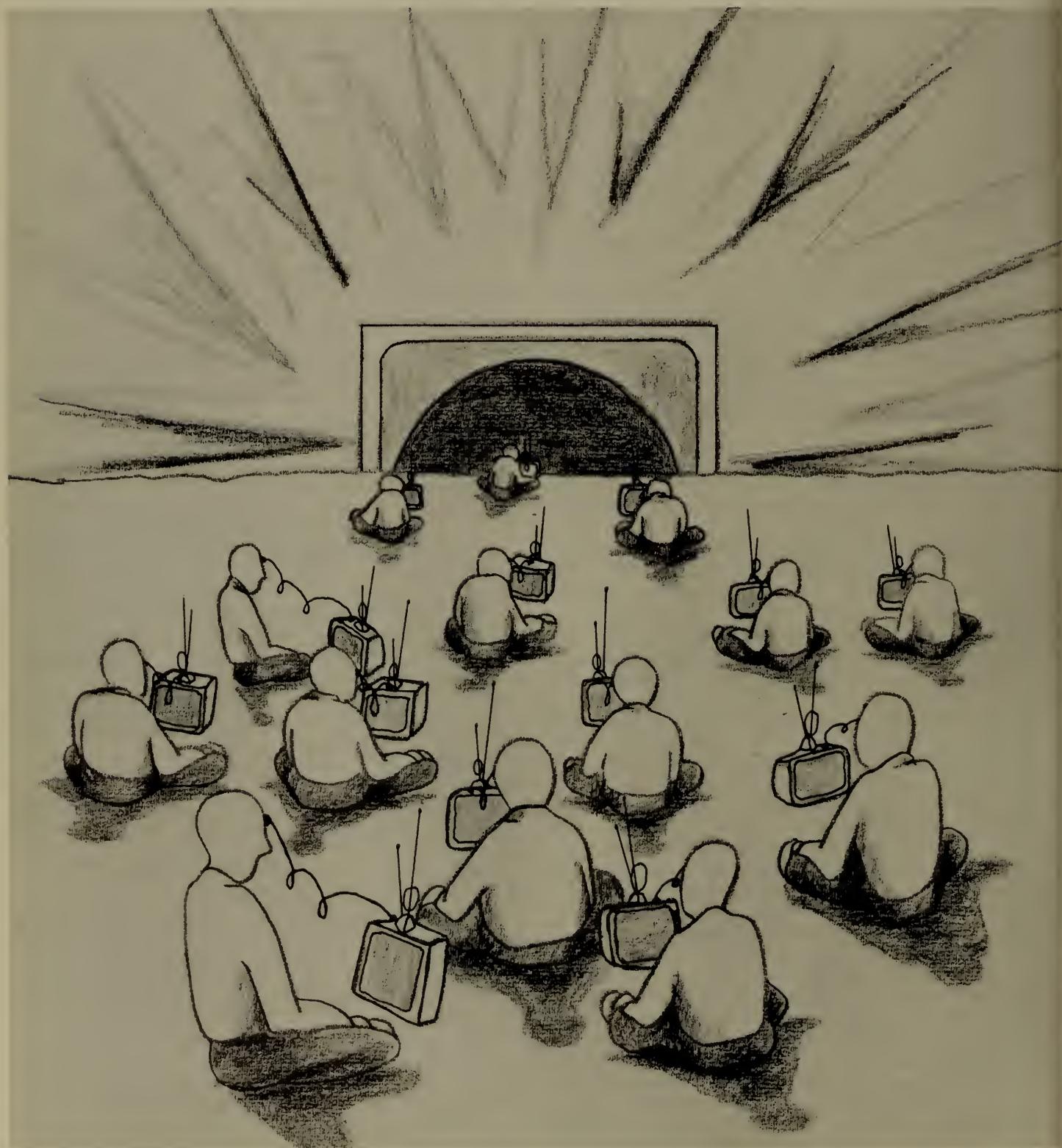
"You know more than some of the boys at the seminary," said the Bishop. I didn't bother to explain that I was something of a minor expert in the field, a graduate of my own Famous Saints School.

In the weeks since I visited Boston's Museum of Fine Arts to see the Treasures of Early Irish Art exhibit, I have learned why that visit prompted these and so many other memories. The art of ancient Ireland helped bring back a part of me that I had almost lost. I'm glad to have it back again.

Jim McGahay

Plugged in and turned off

Three alumni in the broadcasting field offer their opinions on 'the tube'





The networks are programming to the same audience with the same type of show, with imitation, with exploitation, and, more and more I think, with tastelessness.

Anthony LaCamera, '34



We hear about the 'golden days' of television — they would still be on if you wanted them. You don't want them. And television will give you what you want.

Joseph Damino, '63



I don't think government should be telling you what you should hear and what you should see, because if it can tell you that it's going to tell you what you can think and what you can do.

Charles Ferris, '54, J.D. '61

Anthony LaCamera, television critic

I wonder sometimes about the influence of the critic. After 30 years, you say to yourself, "By gosh, I think it's minimal." . . . I think my influence has certainly been less than a station or network executive or a government regulator. Since starting way back in December 1948, and almost finding I keep writing the same things, I have seen little, truly little, improvement in television. I'm not talking about the technical improvements, which have been vast, and I'm not talking about some of the great things that television has given us — the fine films, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, *Roots*, the sports events, some of the live news events. Television has been made for some of these great things. But where regular programming, particular network programming, is concerned, there hasn't been that much change.

Over these 30 years, I've seen television grow into an enormous business. . . . Last year, throughout the country, the total television industry revenue was \$5.9 billion. That's a lot of money. And the pre-tax profits overall were \$1.4 billion. That's a lot of money. The networks' revenue was \$2.5 billion and their pre-tax profits were \$555 million. A market like Boston, with a half-dozen stations or whatever, the stations' revenue was up in the \$57 millions as of last year and their pre-tax profits, \$26 million. . . . When you get figures like this, you say, "This, in the final analysis, is what determines our programming." It's not easy for a critic or a viewer to convince networks or stations that they should uplift their programming, that their aim should be more cultural, more public-spirited, more informational and more high-minded.

I've also learned something else in these 30 years — there's a new word called "demographics." The networks and the programming producers are trying very hard and often succeeding in attracting and playing to the 18 to 34 group. Most desirable to them are women 18 to 34 because for some reason they feel that women 18 to 34 control the purse strings. The commercials and the shows are very much geared to them. Networks, sta-

tions, producers, programmers have no compunctions about publicly advertising that "Our show is aimed at the 18 to 34s" or that "Our overall schedule is number one with the 18 to 34 group." Being '34 only in class, I say, "Well, what about me? Is not television also supposed to serve me and my public?"

The biggest change in television has been that for the first time in the history of civilization we have lost control over what comes into our homes

. . . I'm very concerned about prime time, because I feel this is where you get the biggest audiences. I see the networks not only dominating prime time, but programming to the same audience with the same type of show, with imitation, with exploitation, and, more and more I think, with tastelessness. I say to myself, "After these 30 years, have we come to Chuck Barris?" If any one of you doesn't know who Chuck Barris is, he's the "genius" who produces *The Newlywed Game*, *The Dating Game*, *The Gong Show* — dehumanizing, desensitizing, degrading shows. These shows have taken over the access time that the Federal Communications Commission allocated to local stations to give diversity, to give a number of producers an opportunity to get in on it. And what we wind up with is Chuck Barris. The networks are now wooing Chuck Barris because he can deliver a certain audience and he's got two or three other similar shows coming up. You say to yourself, "If this is what we have come to, where have my 30 years gone?"

The biggest change in television, to me anyway, has been that for the first time in the history of civilization we have lost control over what comes into our homes.

I think the influence of the home, school and the church has lessened immeasurably and maybe proportionately. People say to me, "Gee, over 30 years you haven't changed. What you write is the same." I'm afraid this is so and the reason is that I can't rid myself of the basic thought that television comes into the home and that it reaches the most diverse audience possible. It is intrusive, it is pervasive, and it constantly catches families unaware.

The networks say to us, "Look, we are portraying reality. This is the way it is in 1978." I say they ignore the basic reality and above all else that is that television comes into the home. And they choose to ignore it because they don't want to face it. Because of this intrusiveness, this pervasiveness, this entry into the home, I maintain that television is different from other media. . . . There is this inescapable difference that raises the question — Does not television have special responsibilities above, beyond and aside from the First Amendment? I think the question we have to address sometime is just who is supposed to carry out those special responsibilities.

. . . I don't question the accuracy, or the reasonable accuracy, of the (ratings) statistics. I question the use to which they're put. What we have here in the way the networks use these statistics is tyranny of the plurality. What happens is the networks are playing for the same audience every half-hour. Where is it written that they have to be number one every half-hour? But this is what the networks are doing. And, therefore, they say this is what the public wants. But it's one element of the public that they're playing to. . . . What we have is censorship by the numbers and we are not being served. I agree that the government cannot censor, but perhaps the government can look at what we're getting and say that we are not being served and that there should be a greater variety and more delicate content and that this idea of "Can't we be number one every half-hour?" has to go.

... I think we have the right in our homes not to be offended. At least when millions of people are being offended, we have the right not to be. And that right has to be considered as well as the right of the networks to express themselves. . . . The networks choose their public and too many of us are not members of that public.

... I don't buy the idea that parents should assume all the responsibility for what their kids watch. . . . To think that parents can run a veritable police state at home is asking too much. I ask that the networks, that the producers assume some responsibility. I agree you don't do it by violating First Amendment rights, but somehow they've got to take some of

it. If the networks want to be leaders, let them lead and let them not say, "You tell me where you want to go and we'll take you."

Joseph Damino, station general manager

Television is not a baby-sitter. It is not a panacea. It is not the be-all and end-all. And whether you believe it or not, people at the networks give the public what they think the public wants. You in effect vote for the type of programming you like to see. You do it by things called the ratings. Now, a lot of television critics are always pooh-poohing the ratings, but if my statistics courses were accurate here at Boston College, they tell me that the rating samples they carry out in the nation are accurate. They don't sample the entire universe, but they do sample enough of the country to tell the broadcasters that some shows are popular and others aren't popular.

Every time I hear television critics, they always say, "We should have more drama. We should have more public affairs. We should have more opera. We should have all the things that public broadcasting, which is hardly viewed, has." They never say that we should have the things that people want.

... There's a television station in Cleveland that for a short period of time is programming a show called *Tom and Jerry Cartoons*. You may all remember them when you were kids. They were made by M.G.M. and they're full animation and wonderful cartoons and we all enjoyed them in the theaters. That station was having trouble in its ratings at 7:30 at night. Instead of going to the Chuck Barris-type shows or anything like that, they decided that they would come up with a "P.M. magazine" or "evening magazine" program. . . . But in between,

they thought they would put in a show that would just fill the gap until January. Now, they had in that time period something like an eight or nine rating, which is not very good; it is just average for a V.H.F. television station. They programmed, starting in September, *Tom and Jerry Cartoons* to mess up the market, change viewers' patterns of watching, and in the latest rating books they did a 20 rating — a 20 rating. I just submit to you, my friends, that if people did not want to see that program they would not be watching it and that station would not be getting a 20 rating.

Television is a big business, make no mistake about it, and you control that business by your viewing attitudes

You people vote by what you like to see. I don't happen to like *The Newlywed Game*. I wouldn't buy it for our station if they gave it to me. I don't like *The Dating Game*. I don't like *Three's Company*. I'm very concerned about the shows that are on the networks now because years from now they will be my station's bread and butter. Those will be the shows that we will have to pick from to run an independent television station, because we have

to buy all our shows. I'm very concerned about those shows. More importantly, what I'm concerned about is that people are watching them — they're voting with their ratings that they like those shows.

Television is a big business, make no mistake about it, and you control that business by your viewing attitudes. . . . We hear about the "golden days" of television — they would still be on if you wanted them. You don't want them. And television will give you what you want. I submit that you people have to be more selective in your viewing and I suggest that the people who are watching television, in effect, are not being selective or at least not being selective in the terms of what a Tony LaCamera, Joe Dimino or Charles Ferris would like to see.

I wonder sometimes when I watch prime time television, which I do very little these days, where we're going to be a few years from now. I don't think I'm a Puritan. I think my tastes and my likes and dislikes are very similar to anybody else's. It seems to me I woke up one morning and I was the general manager of a television station. Nothing happened to me. I didn't become anointed. I didn't change in character when I became the general manager. So I don't think I changed very much, but I have to tell you that when *Three's Company* comes off the network — I won't buy it first of all but second of all there'll be a number of shows like that and I'll be hard-pressed to make a decision. And it's because people are watching it and they like it that the networks give it to you.

We have another area — children's programming. We are under severe attack all the time about children's programming because some people feel that television stations are leading children down the primrose path. Again I go back to my opening remark — television is not a babysitter. You as parents have an obligation and a duty to restrict your children's television viewing to what you think is beneficial for them.

I personally have a problem with all the toys that are advertised on television — when I stop and realize that in a number of cases the packaging for those toys is worth more than the contents. And I'm

also troubled that children, apparently, if I'm to believe a lot of the things I read, can absolutely influence their parents to buy all this junk for them. If I were you, I wouldn't buy it for them and I think you have to exercise parental control over that. . . . If a product is sold legally in this country — like cigarettes, like toys, like children's cereals — you can't go to the television station and stop them from advertising it. You've got to go to the manufacturers, you've got to go to the source. Stop it there or at the very least you've got to stop it at your home. Very definitely television is an intrusive

medium. By that very nature, parents and guardians have to exercise judgment over what their children watch.

I leave you with this final point: you people out there vote for what you like and it is only by your selective viewing of television that you will change what's on the air. Believe me, these people at the networks are only interested — I shouldn't say "only" but very much interested — in their economic viability. They're very sensitive to what you like and what you don't like. And, right now, the people in New York think they're giving you what you like.

Charles Ferris, F.C.C. Chairman

I have very strong opinions with respect to television, with respect to what comes into my home, what I watch and what my children should watch. But I feel, as well, that I should separate my personal tastes and my personal prejudices from my responsibilities as a public figure. I do not think I have the right as the chairman of the F.C.C. to impose my tastes upon each of you. I don't think government should be telling you what you should hear and what you should see, because if it can tell you that it's going to tell you what you can think and what you can do. And I don't think that's the role of government in our society.

. . . We have the freedom even to make mistakes. We have the freedom to have poor taste and, as Chuck Barris was mentioned here earlier, even Chuck Barris has demonstrated that you can never underestimate the poor taste of the American TV viewer. I don't think that the government should ban Chuck Barris, or anyone like Chuck Barris. That's not the government's role. We have to tolerate things that we even find distasteful on the airwaves. So, I just want to keep that premise in mind — that's my bias — that the government should not intrude into this area because there are areas where there can be checks and balances other than by government imposition.

. . . The economics of the broadcasting industry and the premises that drive the decisions now — and the decisions are made in New York by the networks — are because of the basic allocations of our airwaves. It was a decision by the F.C.C. back in 1952 going to the V.H.F. rather than the U.H.F. mode that dictated to a great extent the economics of the industry today. There are only three networks and I say this — only the economics is such that there can only be three networks. Through these three faucets, all programming decisions must flow really to have economic viability.

formation, seek to reach 100 percent of the market. All three want to reach all 100 percent. They compete for the total market. So, when you have each going for all, you get a lowest common denominator mentality driving the decisions with respect to the programming and what will have the greatest chance of getting the largest share of the 100 percent. If we can generate further capacity and channels, so that in maybe 10 years we have, rather than four networks, including public television, we have eight, I think we will have crossed that critical mass whereby the psychology that drives programming decisions will not be going for 100 percent of the market, but for perhaps 20 percent. . . .

We should be able to do something with our time other than watch television and we should be more discreet about what we watch

. . . I think the reason why you have distaste or I have distaste, maybe, for the programming on television is because all three networks, all three sources of in-

. . . The rules of the Federal Communications Commission over the past 15 years have been oppressive when it comes to what we've done to the cable industry and its capacity for growth. We have prevented the cable industry from growing and we're moving very rapidly toward investigating the economic premises that would remove this type of restriction on this industry so that it would be able to provide much greater capacity to your home. . . . The technology is way ahead of the marketplace with respect to capacity of bringing technology into your

home, bringing in all kinds of services. You are going to have not only programs coming into your home, you're going to have the capacity to reach into all forms of information banks and retrieve that information into your home. The British and French are way ahead of us on that type of "teletex" and "view-data" type of a system where you can retrieve a great deal of information into your home, just by the use of a simple keyboard to request certain information.

So, I think that the premises can change. We're going to do everything we can at the F.C.C. to assure that the increased capacity will be available to the consumer. Then the consumer can truly make his choices as to what he wants — not sit there in just a pool of dissatisfaction, but be able truly to choose.

The risk, of course, is going to be that there will be some things on that television tube that you might not like. And the real solution to that is to turn the dial. It shouldn't be government censoring what comes over that airwave. Whether it's good information or bad information, you shouldn't trust me or any of my successors with making the judgment of what is good, what is tasteful — that should be choices that you make. If you want to petition, your petition goes to licensees. You can go to your local broadcaster and tell him you don't like it.

When we complain about what is on television, keep in mind that this is not a perfect medium. There are about 40,000 books published in the United States each year — that's an awful lot of books. Of those 40,000 books, how many do you

think are really worth reading? I don't know, maybe 100 are truly worth reading and maybe a dozen of those are those you feel you must read. Now, that's out of 40,000. We shouldn't expect television to have 24 hours a day of perfect programming. They too are publishing rapidly. They're publishing their 40,000 books a year as well. And so, that for every moment that we don't have *Masterpiece Theater*, *Holocaust* or *Roots* on, don't say, "It's a failure, it's a total failure."

We should be able to do something with our time other than watch television and we should be more discreet about what we watch. The very fact that the television set is on eight hours a day in every home is somewhat startling from the standpoint of what we do with our free and leisure time.



Charles Ferris, left, and Joseph Damino listen to Anthony LaCamera at the Alumni Senate panel on television.

The weather is always doing something

Snowstorms in New England are the result of the interaction of complex meteorological factors — and fate

by Edward M. Brooks

Boston's greatest recorded snowstorm, Feb. 6-7, 1978, dumped 28 inches of new snow on top of old snow on the ground at Boston College to give an average depth of more than 30 inches. Such a "good old-fashioned snowstorm" in its most intense form often receives the title "blizzard," but, strictly speaking, this is a misnomer. There is a sharply defined difference between a heavy snowstorm and a blizzard.

The characteristics of a blizzard are a gale wind, zero cold and drifting snow, which does not have to be accompanied by actual snowfall. The 1978 storm here had hurricane force winds up to 79 miles per hour in gusts at the Boston airport, but there was no zero cold nor drifting snow from the old snow on the ground.

The true blizzard is almost unknown in the East. It sometimes occurs in the Midwest, but its native heath is the Great Plains. During the 1978 snowstorm here, in fact, the Dakotas were experiencing a true blizzard with a southeast gale. The snowbound North Dakotans complained that the media ignored their plight and gave all the publicity to the storm in the Northeast.

One of my responsibilities, though unofficial, at B.C. is to give warnings of impending severe storms such as hurricanes, tornadoes and snowstorms. Since my arrival in 1965, the campus has had no major hurricanes or tornadoes, although a tornado struck Chestnut Hill and killed a 14-year-old girl at the Longwood Cricket Club, only one mile south of B.C., on Aug. 9, 1972. All weather problems that I have dealt with have been snowstorms, including one great storm of Jan. 20-21, 1978, with 21 inches (eclipsed by the snow blitz 19 days

later) and two great storms in February 1969 — 20 inches of heavy wet snow at B.C. (only 11 inches at Logan Airport) Feb. 9-10, and 25 inches Feb. 24-28.

The February snow 'blitz'

Sunday, Feb. 5, the day before Boston's greatest snowstorm began, was a normal winter day with cold air, high but slowly falling pressure and increasing cloudiness. In the early morning hours of Monday, Feb. 6, very light snow began to fall. By the time it ended at 8:45 a.m., there was just enough snow to make previously shoveled areas white again.

The night of Feb. 7-8 was a wild night, with hurricane gusts continuing almost to midnight. . . . Between 9:40 and 10 p.m., lightning and thunder broke out, adding a bizarre touch to the white swirling snow

There were still no local signs of anything unusual about to happen. Weather forecasters, however, were issuing forecasts of a major low pressure area developing.

At 9 a.m., barometric pressure started falling rapidly and a northeast wind began to blow noticeably. An hour later, the pressure made an irregular small rise before falling again even more rapidly at 11 a.m. From about 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. light snow fell with greatly increasing wind. By noon, gusts reached hurricane force, swirling the snow across Middle Campus. This indicated that the pre-

dicted low pressure area had not only developed, but was approaching Boston. Yet the amount of snowfall so far was trivial.

At 1 p.m., the light snow changed to moderate snow and continued with hurricane gusts all afternoon. With radio reports of heavy snow and hurricane winds beginning south of Boston, some University personnel took the opportunity to head for home.

The night of Feb. 7-8 was a wild night, with hurricane gusts continuing almost to midnight. All Monday evening classes were cancelled before the moderate snow changed to heavy snow at 6 p.m., at which time new snow varied from two to four inches in depth. A dramatic increase in snow depth occurred by 8:30 p.m., when new snow depth varied from six to 11 inches, the variation due to drifting. Between 9:40 and 10 p.m., lightning and thunder broke out, adding a bizarre touch to the white swirling snow and cutting visibility to less than a mile. There was some let-up of the storm when the thunderstorm ended. The pressure stopped dropping at the same time (10 p.m.) and gusts diminished to less than hurricane force. Heavy snowfall continued nevertheless past midnight before diminishing to moderate snowfall early Tuesday morning. The pressure started falling again at midnight and continued to a minimum between 6 and 7 a.m. Another thunderstorm came at 6 a.m. to finish that strange night.

On the morning of Feb. 7, residents looked out to see snow about 1.5 feet deep on the average, but with drifts over five feet blocking doorways and almost covering some first-floor windows. It was beautiful, but very confining. Although the average depth at that time was less than in the January 1978 and the two February 1969 snowstorms, the drifts were much deeper because of hurricane winds, which did not occur in the other two



A snowbound Recreation Complex during the February 1978 snow 'blitz.'

storms. If the storm had stopped in the morning, it would have still been a remarkable storm. Yet, in spite of the pressure rising all day, moderate snow continued until late afternoon. By 3 p.m., 10 more inches had fallen on top of the 18 inches that had fallen earlier to give a total of 28 inches. Light snow persisted until 11 p.m. without making any visible increase in depth.

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, the big shovel-out began in earnest. My porch had what looked like four tons of snow on it. Boston College was not able to open for the rest of the week, but was ready by Monday, Feb. 13. The mayor of Newton, however, did not permit transportation in the city until Feb. 14. The University was closed slightly more than a week.

What happened at Boston College during the 1978 storm did not represent by any means conditions that prevailed along the Massachusetts coast, where hurricane winds onshore raised the level of the sea and smashed seaside communities with gigantic waves. Studies and reports by Benno Brenninkmeyer, S.J., Assistant Professor of Geology and Geophysics at the University, demonstrated the impact of the storm in this area (*Boston College Bridge Magazine*, Spring 1978).

In addition to coastal destruction, two other factors made the impact of the 1978 snow blitz so much greater than that of January 1978 and the two of February 1969, which also gave at least 20 inches of snowfall. One was the hurricane winds (the February 1969 storms had maximum windspeeds of 56 and 45 miles per hour in Boston) and the other was the dryness of the snow (the February 1969 snows were wet and heavy). Both of these factors led to drifts of up to more than 10 feet, bringing transportation to a standstill and thereby shutting down the entire Boston area for nearly a week.

Observing snowstorm situations

When the U.S. Weather Service began as a branch of the Army Signal Corps in 1870, it was found that there were areas of low and high pressure, whose centers generally moved across the country from a westerly direction. Ordinarily, high pressure areas moved from the northwest toward the Atlantic Ocean, where they joined and reinforced the semipermanent Bermuda-Azores high. Low pressure areas, however, moved from west to southwest on paths converging toward the northeast U.S., namely New England, on the way toward Newfoundland.

As everyone who has an aneroid barometer knows, rising and high pressure are supposed to be accompanied by fair weather, whereas falling and low pressure indicate bad weather, which includes precipitation. In the summer months, June through August, no solid precipitation except hail has been observed in Boston. Snow has fallen in the other three seasons, September through May, even when the temperature was above 32°F, (0°C), but not as high as 50°F (10°C).

The only snow to fall in September at B.C. was on the 30th in 1961, when snowflakes fell for several hours, but melted as they hit the ground. May snows are more common, the greatest storm being that of May 9-10, 1977, during the week of final examinations at B.C. Accompanied by thunderstorms, 6.5 inches of snow fell on deciduous trees in full leaf and overloaded the branches. The resulting broken branches and felled trees constituted more destruction to trees than that caused locally by the great New England hurricane of Sept. 21, 1938.

In spite of these oddities, 12 out of 18 of our snowstorms of 14 or more inches occur in February, one month after the lowest ground temperatures and one month before the lowest ocean and upper air temperatures.

In winter, there are considerable differences between low pressure areas in the quantity and type of precipitation they produce at one place. When a low center follows a path to the northwest of Boston, precipitation is generally light and is mostly rain, but a low passing to the southeast usually gives heavy precipitation, all snow.

It may seem strange, but this region's big snowstorms are produced by lows originating over the warm Gulf Stream or the southern states, such as the Carolinas, Georgia, or even Florida. The path

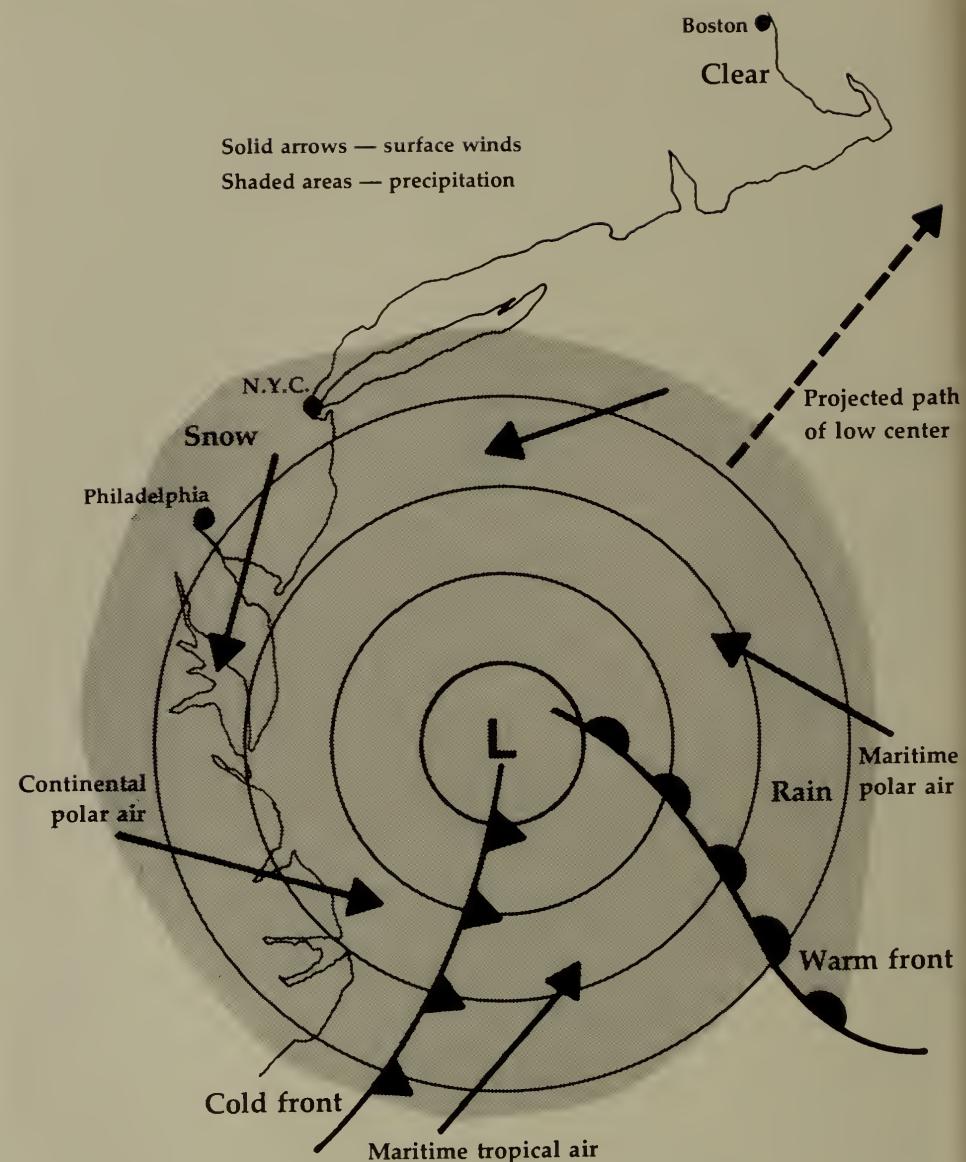


Figure 1. A contrived weather diagram of the typical snowstorm discovered by Benjamin Franklin.

of such storms was discovered in a surprising manner more than 200 years ago.

In a letter to a Boston friend, Benjamin Franklin wrote that he was unable to view a lunar eclipse because of a northeast snowstorm in Philadelphia. He was surprised to get a reply saying his friend experienced the northeast storm late enough for a view of the eclipse before the storm clouds arrived. From this information, Franklin concluded that since the lunar eclipse was simultaneous in Philadelphia and Boston the storm must have occurred later in Boston and hence was traveling from the southwest, opposite to the wind direction (see Figure 1).

If such a condition of oppositeness were not present, a low pressure area

moving from the southwest would bring warm southwest winds, with rain instead of snow. Instead, the Gulf Stream heats and moistens the air converting it to a "maritime tropical" (mT) air mass, which then glides up over the "maritime polar" (mP) air mass of the cold New England water, the air masses being separated by a warm front. This front moves so slowly that it does not reach Boston before the storm center passes. Hence, the temperature stays low, the wind backing from northeast, then north and finally northwest. The maritime tropical air is cooled enough to produce sublimation of saturated vapor into snow, which amounts to one foot for each inch of precipitable water (of the vapor).

Forecasting 'ordinary' snowstorms

The problems involved in forecasting can be divided into four questions. Will there be precipitation? If so, how much? Will it be snow? If so, how long will the snow last?

A cyclonic storm with precipitation can be predicted only if a low pressure area is approaching from the Midwest, Gulf of Mexico, Middle or South Atlantic coast.

Heavy precipitation can be predicted if the center is expected to pass nearby to the south or southeast of Boston; moderate precipitation if the center will pass well to the south or southeast; or light precipitation if the center will pass to the north or northeast.

To determine the likelihood of snow, compute the weighted average temperature of Boston and of the summit of Mount Washington in New Hampshire according to the following formula:

$$T_{\text{mean}} = \frac{T_{\text{Mt.W.}} + 2T_{\text{Bos.}}}{3}$$

If the value of T_{mean} is greater than 30°F, predict rain for Boston; if less than 25°F, predict snow. If T_{mean} is between 25°F and 30°F, predict rain if the temperature trend is upward and predict snow if the trend is downward.

If a low center is expected to pass north to northwest of Boston, the snow can be expected to last a short time, then change to ice pellets, freezing rain and rain before the warm front passes. The reverse sequence will occur more rapidly when the cold front passes. If the low center is expected to pass south or southeast of Boston, it can be predicted that the precipitation will continue as snow and then end sometime after the low has gone by. Front passages and rain should not be expected.

The existence of an intense, slow-moving high pressure area over eastern Quebec and the Gulf of St. Lawrence would justify the forecast of a great

snowstorm instead of an ordinary snowstorm in the Northeast. Although the weather in the area of the high would be clear, cold and nearly calm, the south side of the high has very different weather—cloudy and windy. The high produces a belt of northeast winds across Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, New England and New York. Figures 2-7 offer examples of various types of weather patterns.

Snowstorm forecasting discussed above has been based primarily on the path of a low pressure center. In this discussion, however, it was assumed that such a path was known. This is valid in retrospect, after a storm has passed, but at the time of the snow forecast, the path is not known and must also be forecasted. The success of a snow forecast is contingent on a good forecast of the storm path. The motion of a storm center is determined by winds aloft, but until now (at least in this article) upper air conditions have been ignored.

Types of 'great' snowstorms

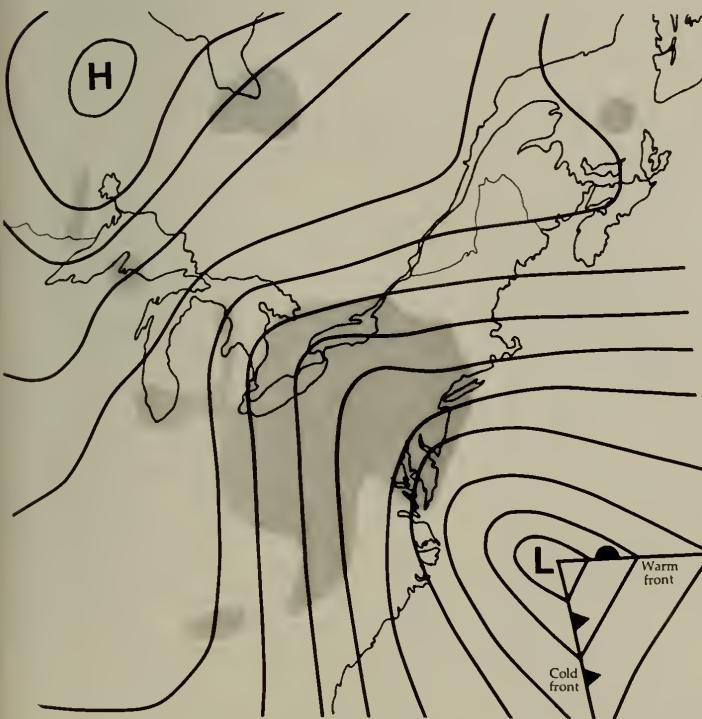


Figure 2. Feb. 6, 1978

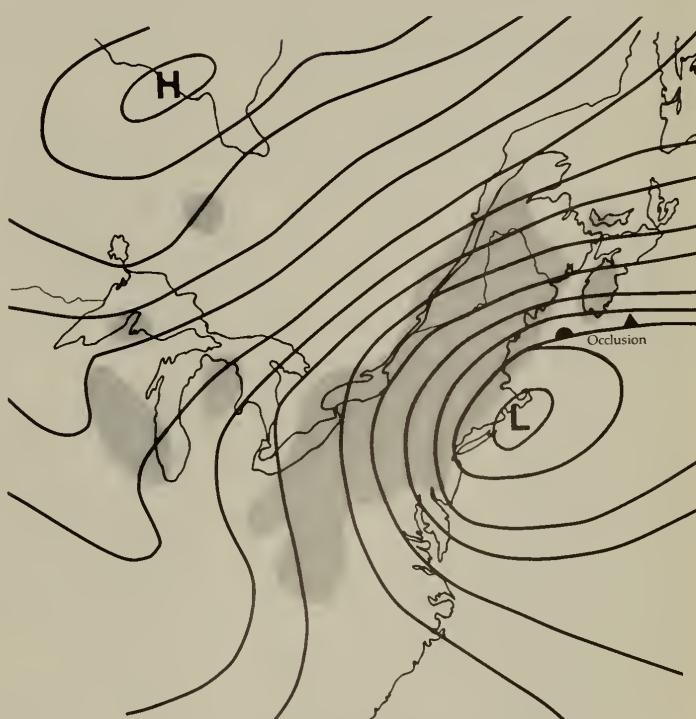


Figure 3. Feb. 7, 1978

Type A. If an ordinary snowstorm over the Middle Atlantic coast, with northeast winds over New Jersey and Pennsylvania, is approaching from the southwest (Figure 2), the two northeast wind zones are joined over southern New England and southern New York. As the low pressure center gets closer to the high center (Figure 3), the pressure gradient between them intensifies and the northeast winds blowing in from Boston Harbor reach gale force (more than 31 miles an hour) at Logan Airport. Another intensification effect is due to the usual deepening of the low pressure area as it approaches. This makes the pressure difference between the low and high centers greater, since the pressure at the high center is nearly constant. As a result, the coastal onshore winds can increase dramatically with gusts reaching hurricane force (more than 75 miles an hour).

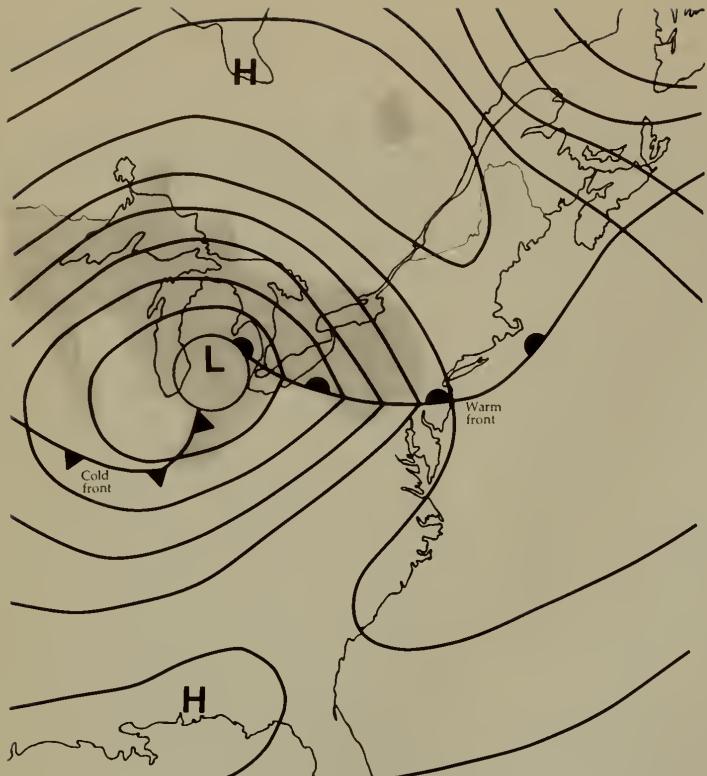


Figure 4. Dec. 20, 1975



Figure 5. Dec. 21, 1975

Type B. A high pressure area in the Canadian Maritime Provinces, such as in Figure 4, has a different effect on a low pressure area over the Great Lakes moving from the west. The high's northeast winds across New York block the normal progression of the low and its warm front, which would otherwise be moving from the southwest. This allows the cold front to catch up with the warm front southeast of the low center. In this "occlusion process," the warm air mass, which was between the two fronts, is forced aloft near the low center. As the occlusion process continues, the base of the occlusion (the northernmost tip of the warm sector at the surface) moves farther southeast until it is over the Atlantic Ocean south of Long Island. As there is no longer any warm air on the land surface, the low pressure area starts to fill, or weaken with rising pressure. More important, however, is the likelihood of a new low pressure area developing at the base of the occlusion off the Middle Atlantic coast (Figure 5). This secondary low has a good potential for intensification because of the availability of heat and moisture in the warm air mass from the Gulf Stream. The continued presence of the pronounced blocking high in eastern Canada creates the situation for the development of a great snowstorm with hurricane gusts at Logan Airport (the same as in type A above). An additional contributing factor is the arrival of the very cold air mass from behind the cold front of the first low. When this air mass passes offshore, it presents a great contrast to the warm moist air mass and thus energizes the new secondary low pressure system.

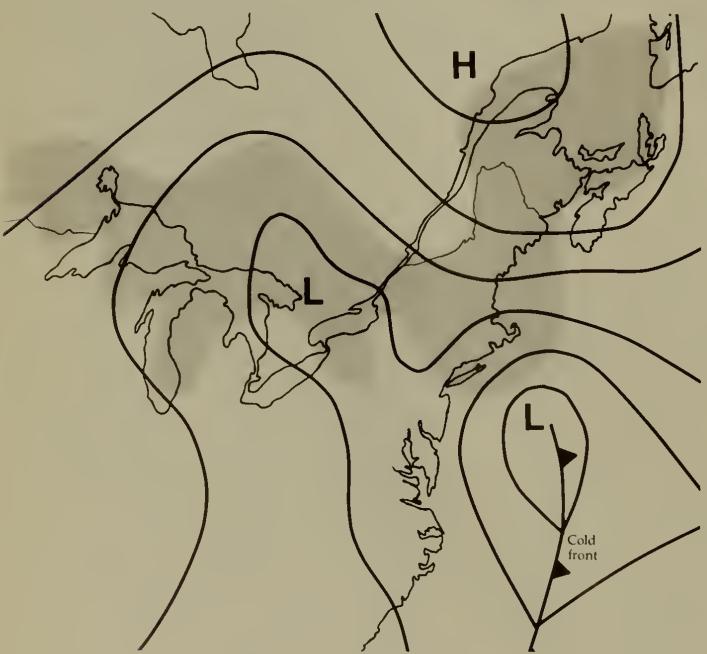


Figure 6. Feb. 24, 1969

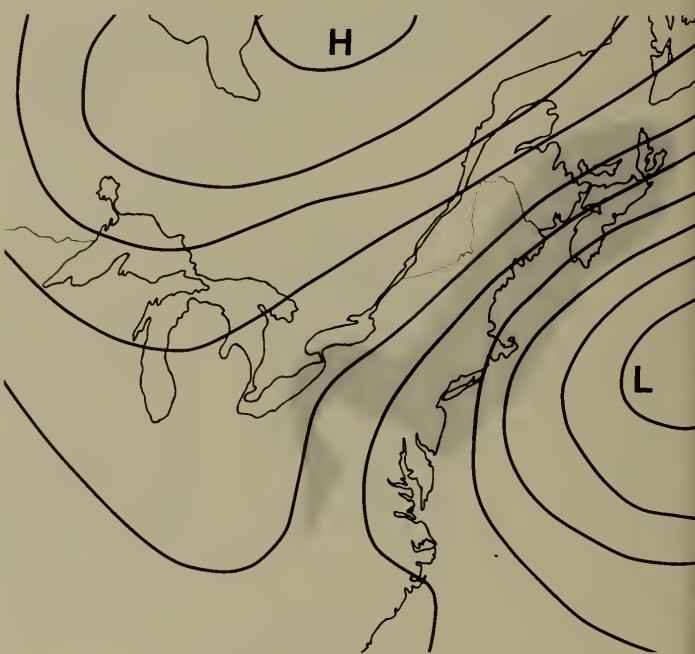


Figure 7. Feb. 27, 1969

Type C. In both types A and B, hurricane gusts accompanied the great snowstorms, but this is not a requirement. The two February 1969 snowstorms of 20 and more inches for example, were accompanied by only gale winds. How could these heavy snows have been produced by only ordinary low pressure areas typical of only ordinary northeast snowstorms? The important factor was the slow speed of motion of the low center itself. The amount of snowfall is equal to the product of the rate of snowfall and its duration. Types A and B had high rates of snowfall, whereas type C had a long duration, four days in this example. The second giant snowstorm of February 1969 (Figures 6, 7) lasted four days. The slowness of a low's motion may be due to the blocking effect of a Canadian high (such as in types A and B) and it may be aided as the result of the natural tendency of a deepening storm to retard as it completes its life cycle (type C). In its final stages, an intense low becomes a drifting circular vortex of cold air.

The jet stream

Jet streams are narrow zones of strong westerly winds at an average altitude of about 30,000 feet. There are two polar front jet streams that circulate at middle latitudes about the north and south poles.

High and lows can be regarded as rotating whirls steered by upper winds at 10,000 feet associated with the jet stream, just like little eddies in a river

Knowledge of the northern hemisphere jet stream's pattern across the U.S. is useful for forecasting the movements of migratory sea-level pressure centers. High pressure areas generally move from the northwest and low pressure areas, from the southwest. It turns out that most highs are located nearly beneath the portion of the jet stream where its flow is from the northwest, whereas the lows are usually under the southwest flow of the jet. The highs and lows can be regarded as rotating whirls steered by upper winds at 10,000 feet associated with the jet stream, just like little eddies in a river. This association is so frequent it cannot be regarded as only coincidence, but suggests a causal connection.

The jet stream, as a forecasting tool, became more valuable when it was realized that it not only controlled the motion of sea-level low pressure areas but caused them to form in the first place. In addition to statistical evidence for lows forming under the jet stream, there are theoretically several ways in which this could occur.

The simplest example of this occurrence is when a jet stream is located above a convective column of rising warm air. In this situation (Figure 8), the jet stream tends to carry away the top of the column horizontally. An analogy of this is wind blowing across the top of a chimney — the resulting Bernoulli pressure drop at the top causes an upward acceleration of air within the chimney. This suction caused by the jet stream produces low pressure at the ground dynamically. The surface drop is also hydrostatically aided by a loss in the total weight of the air column.

Jet stream and updraft air

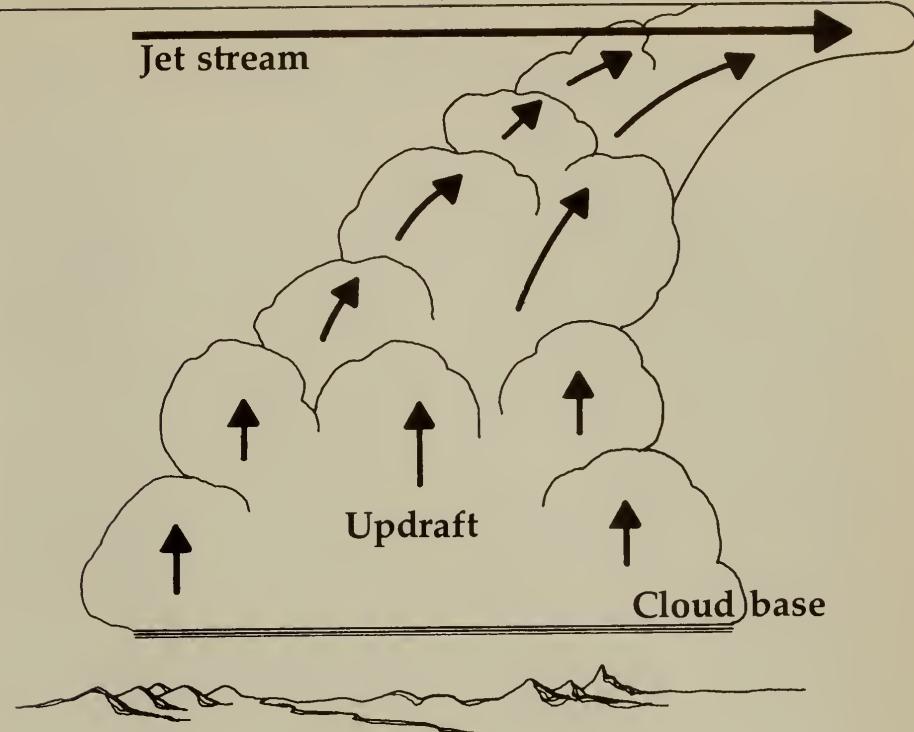


Figure 8.

The life of a low

A low's life involves much more action than a high's life of serene, quiet, fair, sunny or starry skies. The intensity of a low can be reckoned in terms of its sea-level pressure — maximum strength corresponding to minimum pressure. A more precise measure of a low's intensity is the average kinetic energy of its cyclonic wind system, which is proportional to the square of the windspeed. An advantage of this measure is that the evolution of the storm can be expressed in terms of other forms of energy on the assumption that total energy is conserved and that work changes one type of energy to another.

In the low's life cycle, potential energy is the source of increasing kinetic energy, whereas heat energy is the sink for kinetic energy when it is decreasing. The first energy transformation is caused by the work of pressure gradient forces, and the second is a result of the work done by the opposing viscous force and the force of friction between the wind and the earth's surface.

The potential energy of a winter low pressure area is gravitational in nature. The greatest potential energy is that of a cold sea-level high pressure, the weight of which is due to the great density of cold air. The magnitude of this potential energy is proportional to the height of the center of gravity (or center of mass) of the

cold air mass. As the cold air moves outward from the high, its center of gravity descends, giving a decrease of potential energy. The missing potential energy was converted into kinetic energy, the increase of which was shown by the acceleration of the outflow. At maximum wind speed, the acceleration is zero, the speed and kinetic energy are constant. At this moment, the gain from potential energy is exactly balanced by the frictional loss to heat energy.

During the decaying stage, the kinetic energy transfer to heat energy is the dominant action. Another sink for the kinetic energy is the increase of potential energy of the warm air mass, whose center of gravity rises as the warm air glides up over the fronts. Since the warm air is less dense than the cold air, the total potential energy showed a net decrease (the warm-air increase smaller than the cold-air decrease). The occlusion process ends when the cold air mass has spread out completely under the warm air mass. The life cycle takes about one or two weeks.

A secondary source of storm energy is the heat of condensation released in the rising saturated air. Unlike a winter storm, this energy source is the principal source for a tropical cyclone, which feeds on the copious supply of warm moist air.

Brooks' forecast

The basis for future weather has always been past weather, just as forecasts are based on observations. This approach, however, is valid only if the climate is constant. In this century it became evident that climactic characteristics cannot be determined any better by the use of a very long record because of a trend in the values of successive 10-year averages. The conclusion is that not only is weather changing, but climate as well. For this reason, it is customary to define present climate as the statistics of weather for the past 30 years only.

Compare the average frequencies of snowstorms for the past three decades, for example, with the past nine decades. In 28 years (1951-1978, since 1979 and 1980 are unknown) there were 21 snows of 10 inches or more, including eight of at least 14 inches. The corresponding average frequencies are 7.5 and 2.9 snowstorms per 10 years. This means that in any one year there is a 75 percent chance of a 10-inch plus snow, including a 29 percent chance of a 14-inch plus snow and a 46 percent chance of a snow between 10 and 14 inches. The corresponding frequencies for the last 88 years (1891-1978) averaged 6.0 and 2.1 snows for 10 years, or 60 percent and 21 percent chances for one year (10+ and 14+ inches, respectively). The data show that the present climatological expectation for snow is 25 percent higher (75%-60%/60%) for 10-inch plus snowstorms and 39 percent higher (29%-21%/21%) for 14-inch plus snows than would be expected from using the longer record. A contributing factor to the increased snowiness, if it is real, may be the general downward trend in temperature in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains since the 1950s.

This statistical outlook might be made more reliable if the assumption of statistical independence is dropped. For example, the four greatest snowstorms on record at B.C. occurred in only two years

(1969 and 1978) instead of four years. For each pair of storms, the time interval between the first and second storm was between 15 and 18 days. This suggests the persistence of a weather pattern indicated by repetitive jet stream configurations instead of a mere coincidence.

A count of the eight snowstorms of 14 inches or more for the past 28 years showed 22 years with none, four years (1958, 1960, 1961 and 1975) with one storm each, and the remaining two years (1969 and 1978) with two great storms each. Since these eight great snowstorms occurred in only six years instead of eight the probability of getting a 14-inch plus snow in any year is only 21 percent instead of 29 percent. Of those six years, however, one-third of them, or seven percent of 28 years, will have two storms; the remaining two-thirds, or 14 percent of 28 years, having one storm. In other words, expect at least one 14-inch plus storm in one year out of five instead of one year out of 3.5; or in two, instead of three, years in 10.

I would never expect the snowstorm probability in any other year to be greater than in 1980

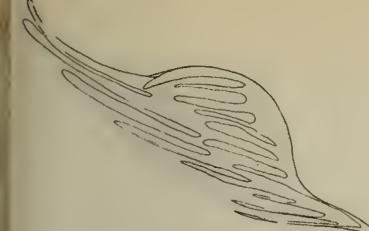
What about the outlook for 1979 and 1980? By the time this is read, it will be too late to use a 1979 forecast. Before I give my outlook for 1980, I would like to point out a curiosity about the years of great snowstorms. All except one (1975) of the eight storms with 14-inches plus of the last 28 years occurred within three years of maximum sunspot frequency (in

the 11-year sunspot cycle) — 1958, 1968, and 1979 (predicted). The first maximum was attended by three (1958, 1960, and 1961) such storms in four years, the second maximum had the two great 1969 storms, and the third had the two great 1978 storms. Only three of the eight storms were more than one year from a year of sunspot maximum (1960, 1961 and 1975). Since 1980 is expected to be only one year from a sunspot maximum, it should have a high probability of getting a snowstorm of 14 inches or more. Out of seven years within one year of sunspot maximum, such storms occurred in three years (1958, 1969, and 1978). Although this tabulation by itself may not be statistically significant, I will use it in my 1980 outlook because in other studies I found that years near sunspot maxima tend to be colder than normal and have more than normal precipitation for places east of the Rockies (cold air and precipitation adds up to snow).

I will conclude with the outlook of three chances out of seven, or 43 percent, for at least one 14-inch snowstorm in 1980. I could be even more rash by using the same statistics for the outlook of a great storm of 20 inches or more in 1980. Since this happened in two years (1969 and 1978) out of seven, or 29 percent, I wouldn't be too surprised if it happened in 1980. But in each of these two years, there were two blockbusters of over 20 inches (again 29 percent). Here, I refuse to go along with these statistics, because the double whammy never occurred before in the 88 years of record. If even one giant snowstorm occurs in 1980, I will consider my forecast verified, because the chance of a storm dumping more than only 14 inches in 1980 is less than probable (less than 50 percent). I can rephrase my outlook, nevertheless, by saying that I would never expect the snowstorm probability in any other year to be greater than that in 1980.

Think snow.





Weather or not, it's still a topic of conversation

Figure 1.

It has often been said that there are two kinds of people in this world. This is quite true. There are those who chat about the weather and those who do not. About the latter, we need say little more. Like speakers of Ugaritic and killer bees, they are speculatively intriguing, but not creatures any sensible man expects to come across in the course of a lifetime or a post-prandial walk.

The others, the weather-chatters, are everywhere. Like fruits and maple syrup, they may be either plain or fancy.

The plain—and I am one of them—are harmless sorts. What we have to say is either nonsense (Hot enough for you?) or news only to the dungeon-keeper (Boy, is it raining out there!). We occupy all walks of life, but are particularly strong in the service professions. Dentists, bank tellers, bartenders and bus drivers are invariably plain weather-chatters.

The fancy people, who seem unable to make weather-chat without bringing up references to fronts, sunspot activity, degree-day units and the latest view of our planet as taken by an orbiting instamatic, are a growing problem. As with violence and illiteracy, we may safely blame their proliferation upon the pernicious influence of the television medium, which, night after night, pushes before the public eye ungainly men in ill-fitting suits who, in their own best interests and at very high salaries, labor at making weather seem a thing as complex as quantum mechanics or baking a good loaf of French bread. Within the past few months, I have myself stumbled upon these fanciers in Chinese restaurants, a swan boat, the Park Street Underground and my own livingroom, where only the other day, a brother of mine (whom I dearly love) gazed out the window and remarked, "Looks like we've got a polar front coming in." I looked where he looked and saw that it was snowing like crazy.

I think, therefore, that it's time to speak out. Weather ain't fancy. It is, as I intend to illustrate and as every boob knows, simplicity itself.

Consider: Weather, like the children one reads about in a certain sort of fairy tale, may be either good or bad. Whether weather is one or the other depends upon:

- A. The Sun.
- B. The Cloud.
- C. The Season.

The Sun, which you are doubtless all familiar with, is the source of heat, which is to say temperature. During what we call "day," it warms and lights our side of the planet. Simple enough?

Almost as easily comprehended is that the sun, while a great, great, great distance from all of us, lies closer to Texas than to Massachusetts, and closer to the Caribbean than to San Antonio. The result is the booming business in charter flights that, during the winter, transport people from Massachusetts (cold) to the Caribbean (warm). This fact, while noteworthy, is, as some of you may have perceived, a little beside what seems to be the point of this article, but it does bring us rather neatly to factor C, the Season.

In zones known as temperate (there's a good example of meteor-illogical humor) there are two seasons, one of which is

cold and the other which is warm. At the poles of the earth there are also two seasons; both are cold, but one is always dark and one is never dark. In the tropical zone, both seasons are bright and warm. Confusing? Not a bit. One must only understand that the earth, like an electrified Santa Claus I recently came upon in a public bar, rocks slowly back and forth, as though in silent, senseless merriment, bringing now its chest and now its knees in closer proximity to the steady sun.

Doubtless this disturbs a few of you. If the sun, you are asking yourselves, is a Steady Freddy as this writer claims, then how can it be that there are times, even in the warm season, when the weather is bad, and times in the cold season when the weather is worse.

The answer, as some keen readers may already have guessed, is Clouds (remember B?).

There are two sorts of clouds: angel wing-shaped (Figure 1) and camel-shaped (Figure 2). Several informants of mine, in most cases reliable, have reported seeing clouds that take the form of lowering dwarf's heads. They are mistaken. What they no doubt saw was a camel-shaped cloud resting on its side, hump to the viewer. I should also mention here that clouds that appear to resemble majestic purple mountains on the horizon, are really nothing more than heaps of cloud fabric out of which celestial tailors will soon fashion (under our very eyes if we watch closely) the two sorts of clouds I have already mentioned.



Figure 2.

Clouds, whatever their shape, float above the earth and below the sun and have therefore the function of interfering with the transmission of heat and light. Depending upon the season (see paragraph 9: "In zones. . ."), this interference may result in either good or bad weather. Moreover, clouds bear moisture that falls upon our heads in various forms, depending, once more, upon what is the season. As you keen readers will already have grasped, the clouds that carry out this precipitative function, are camel-shaped, of course. Angel wing-shaped clouds, like the human appendix and the legs one finds on certain rare snakes, seem to have no function but the decorative.

These then are the major weather factors deserving of our conversational attention. This is not to say weather chat cannot take into consideration anything more than the sun, season and cloud activities. Rain, for instance, may be described as descending in "sheets" or "buckets," or in the form of "cats and dogs." Considerations of space being what they are, however, I must leave it to the reader to discover these things for himself, perhaps in conversation with a bus driver. Heed the example of your bus driver, my friends, and you will leave your children a world that is as fine a place to pass time in as it was when first you entered it.

Ben Birnbaum

Born again in Roberts Center

Eagles basketball is back near the top and coach Tom Davis is the reason

by Len DeLuca

Two scenes crystallize when one tries to assess the effect Tom Davis has had on the sometimes rocky entity entitled Boston College basketball.

Scene One, Oahu, Dec. 30, 1978: In a tiny dressing room in Blaisdell Center in Honolulu, on a Saturday afternoon when 99 percent of Oahu's population is outdoors, about one dozen collegians are dousing their coach with champagne after a two-point win over Tennessee. This is after the fifth place game of the Rainbow Classic, not the N.I.T., the E.C.A.C.s, or even a major home game at Roberts Center. But to Boston College, the win over the Southeastern Conference team, on the heels of a humiliation at the hands of Purdue, and the second five-point win over Harvard of the '78-'79 season, is a source of celebration.

Scene Two, Chestnut Hill, Jan. 21, 1979: A beaming troika of Bill Flynn, athletic director, Reid Oslin, publicity director, and Tom Davis, struts off the Roberts Center floor after the Eagles' first basketball win over Holy Cross since March, 1975. This is also a two-point, double-overtime win, and Davis' first victory over the rivals from Worcester.

When Tom Davis made his way to Boston College at the beginning of the '77-'78 season, B.C.'s basketball fortunes had ebbed. The Eagles had spread 17 wins out over two seasons, amassing 35 losses, in two winters of discontent at the Heights. The most recent tourney team, the '74-'75 squad, had been Bob Zuffelato's second consecutive 21-9 season, and with several All-East candidates back the next year the pundits were predicting a reenactment of the N.C.A.A. Regional final and more.

It didn't happen. Instead of success, torment and embarrassment ensued, forcing six-year mentor Zuffelato to decide to leave B.C. for a Marshall University assistant's position.

Davis was the choice of Bill Flynn and the selection committee after a host of notables had applied and interviewed for the job. Davis' history at Lafayette College in the Eastern Collegiate Conference was impressive. He had amassed a .700-plus winning percentage at the Easton, Pa. school, albeit in a non-scholarship division. Fine performances by Lafayette in its Madison Square Garden appearances had drawn attention to the stocky, sandy-haired coach with the piercing eyes. Davis entered the New England E.C.A.C. club the subject of restrained respect of his peers.

Davis, in his second year as head basketball coach at the University, was disappointed that his team had lost to U.C.L.A.

The restraints were soon loosened, as B.C. won over Fairfield (an eventual E.C.A.C. finalist), and Miami of Ohio (which would knock Marquette out of the N.C.A.A.s three months later) in Davis' first month of coaching. The Eagles were led by a stringbean center, Bob Benfield, and a rejuvenated guard, Ernie Cobb.

"When Gary (Williams, Davis' assistant coach for seven years, who now is at American University) and I came to B.C. that March, everyone pointed to the disastrous years and the bad actors on B.C." Davis said as he reflected on his first months at the Heights. "You realize that if everything that people told me before

October 15 (the start of practice) was true, we couldn't have won 10 games, let alone 15." B.C. was 15-11 in Davis' rookie year.

Cobb, formerly the uncontrolled gunner, was now the self-assured second guard, lending balance and stability to the Eagles lineup. Jim Sweeney gradually became more self-confident, and B.C. had a tandem in the backcourt that it could rely on, a duo not seen on the Heights since the days of Jere Nolan and Mel Weldon. Cobb and Sweeney, Davis' first projects, matured, and are the co-captains of Davis' 17-4 squad as play entered its final four weeks of regular season.

The Eagles' holiday sojourn to San Francisco, Los Angeles and the Rainbow Classic revealed the Tom Davis that New England coaches have come to know, fear and respect. A two-point loss to St. Mary's was a disappointment. Two nights later, the Eagles were the visitors on U.C.L.A.'s Pauley Pavilion floor. Trailing by as much as 15 early in the second half, B.C. closed within seven of the Top 10 Bruins with Cobb on the bench. The final margin was 22 points, as U.C.L.A. solved B.C.'s press at Pauley. Afterward, B.C.'s locker-room was closed for 10 minutes.

Davis, in his second year as head basketball coach at the University, was disappointed that his team had lost to U.C.L.A. Not that their play, which had kept them only seven points down with seven minutes to go, faltered at that point; not that the Bruins had the benefit of two pivotal late-game calls by the officials; but that the Eagles had lost. Davis does not enter any game without the feeling that his team can win.

"I learn more about the man every game I sit there," said Frank Power, assistant coach and B.C.'s elder statesman of basketball by virtue of his years on the

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Coach Tom Davis

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staff. "A lot of people would have been happy just to shut the fans up in Pauley. But Tom really felt that if we played our game, U.C.L.A. could be beaten."

The anecdote does not intend to suggest that Davis believes he has created the ultimate hoop contingent at Chestnut Hill. As he said to the Kahula-Hilton audience on the eve of the Rainbow Classic, "We've made strides in our program, but we're not anywhere near where we want to be. That's why it's an honor to play teams like Purdue, Arizona State and Tennessee, as well as our Eastern competitors."

What ensued in the Rainbow was a blow-out at the hands of Purdue, subsequent conquerors of Michigan and Michigan State, and Illinois in January, and 80 minutes of exciting, pressure basketball in two wins over Harvard and Tennessee.

Certainly the person most familiar with the intensity of Coach Davis is Mrs. Davis—the former Sharon Dell Shulka. Shari and six-year-old Keno Davis accompanied the coach on the West Coast trip. To assume that the Rainbow Classic was all fun and no pressure would be incorrect, and Shari was the witness.

"We've been in Hawaii for six days now and Tom hasn't had the time to do any sight-seeing. We're going to try after the last game on Saturday," Shari said,

while teaching Keno the fine art of pool-side solitaire.

There is a common feeling of professional respect for Davis. Lee Rose, formerly the North Carolina-Charlotte coach *circa* Cedric Maxwell, and Purdue's rookie coach this season, would not engage in criticism of Davis after the B.C.-Purdue game, despite baiting by Hawaii reporters. The incident during the game that prompted the questions was an elbow that opened Eagle Rick Kuhn's face to the tune of three stitches. Rose viewed it this way:

"Tom came up to me and asked about the action. I told him I hadn't seen any elbow because the ball was in transition, and my players had said nobody hit Kuhn. Tom obviously saw it another way, but said simply, 'If I'm wrong, I apologize.' I know very few coaches who would say that, and for that matter, I know very few coaches who do the job Davis does."

Locally, the comments of Dave Gavitt of Providence and Jackie Leaman of Massachusetts are similar. "When Tom has had the time to develop the aspects of his program at B.C.," said Gavitt, "you guys will have teams with the records you had with Cousy." "Davis is a great coach and a super guy," said Leaman. "We've all stepped into situations like the one he had at B.C., and no one I know ever

straightened things out so quickly."

Perhaps the best index of the effect Davis has had is in the attendance figures. Against Connecticut and the Cross, on inclement winter evenings, Roberts Center held a total of 8,000 people. Channel 56 locally has broadcast five regular season games, while 20 radio broadcasts on three Boston stations have featured the Eagles. T.V.S.' game of the week featured the UConn and Holy Cross wins on successive weeks. Davis and his charges are being noticed.

At the young age of 39, the former Wisconsin high school coach and his family reside within a bounce pass of the campus at Commonwealth Avenue. They are comfortable, yet Davis is never complacent. The talent and performance of the holder of a doctorate in history make one feel the basketball program at B.C., under the Davis, Power, Kevin Mackey and Tom McCarthy quartet has reached some sense of stability, while not halfway to its ultimate destination.

To predict where Tom Davis and B.C. basketball are headed would be to write Scene Three. While the script is being prepared, B.C. can sit back and enjoy the Davis brand of basketball.

Len DeLuca, '74, J.D. '77, is the local radio voice of B.C. basketball.

A student of basketball makes the grade as coach

Men's basketball practice at B.C. often draws onlookers. They are persons very interested in basketball and they know that coach Tom Davis is an excellent instructor and tactician. One such person is Carol Swindler.

Swindler has a particular interest in basketball and in the game here at the University. As the first-year coach of the women's basketball team, she directs a team that is less visible than the men's team, but that has its own quality and accomplishes its own objectives.

Women's basketball at B.C. is played at a different level than men's basketball. The women do, however, play a good regional schedule and the University has

provided much more financial and personnel support than it did only a few years ago. Swindler is a part-time coach here, with a full-time position as physical education instructor and coach at Lexington High School.

'I'd like to go undefeated. I'd always want to. Right now, however, all I want to do is get us competitive.'

Swindler's objectives at B.C. are similar to those of coaches of other programs, with the emphasis on participation and instruction.

"Our purpose definitely is not to be the number one team in the East or even New England, but to develop well-rounded individuals," she said. "I don't ever expect my players to be at the same level as the men."

If her goals are limited, Swindler's competitiveness remains an important part of her personality and of the program.

"I'd like to go undefeated. I'd always want to. Right now, however, all I want to do is get us competitive. I want the

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players to respect me, respect B.C. and respect the program."

The women's basketball program at the University was languishing a bit when Bobbi Carson, Assistant Director of Athletics, started to look for a new coach last year. When Carson talked to the 1975 Springfield College graduate, she knew she had found what she wanted.

"Carol is just a phenomenal student of basketball," Carson said, "and her relative inexperience didn't prevent her from being the best-qualified applicant we had. Her personal qualities and her professional talent made her the person for the job."

Swindler's first tasks as coach were to get to know her players and to begin teaching basketball, all within the context of the program.

"These girls are not your typical 'jocks,' spending all day in the weight room," she said. "They're definitely here first for their education."

"My players are well-rounded athletes. A couple of them play more than one sport here. They all played basketball in high school, and a couple of them were 'stars,' but I don't think the reason they came here was to play basketball."

Many persons probably still remember women's basketball played under rules intended to protect the "gentler sex" — defensive and offensive units limited to respective ends of the court so that the girls wouldn't have to run so much, a pass required after no more than two dribbles of the ball, etc. No more. The current rules of the game, in nearly all respects identical to those of men's basketball, recognize the capabilities of female athletes.

"Female athlete." Some patronizing persons still consider the terms mutually exclusive. Swindler, interestingly enough, would seem to be the last person to qualify the athletic abilities of women, yet acknowledges a distinction.

"I'm a firm believer that you're a lady first and an athlete second," she said. That's certainly not the remark of a militant, but it in no way mitigates her opinion of where women's athletic programs deserve to go.

"We've come a long way, but as far as this women's sport has developed on the court, we've got that far to go off the court," she said.



Coach Carol Swindler

The women's basketball team had a 2-6 record at deadline for this magazine, with 10 games remaining. Not a record Carol Swindler and her players would have liked, but nothing to get down about either.

"After the Bentley tournament, in which we lost two games, people came up to me and said, 'You've got the nicest team.' And I do," Swindler said.

Swindler said plans are being made to help increase popular support for women's basketball. Next season may see women's games precede men's contests, in doubleheaders.

"Fan support is tremendously important," Swindler said. "The girls represent B.C. and it'd be nice to have B.C. come and give them credit, give them support."

John Smith

Vice-President, Finance and Business Affairs

John Smith became financial vice-president of Boston College in December 1970, when the University faced a \$3 million deficit. By the introduction of proven management techniques and budgetary controls, the deficit trend was reversed and, by 1972, the University was on a breakeven basis. Since that time, B.C. has operated on consistently balanced budgets. John Smith had a great deal to do with this change in conditions.

Before coming to B.C., Smith was vice-president of finance and administration and treasurer of Healthcare Corp. He earlier had been director of management information and financial analysis at Raytheon, where he administered the cost reduction program for which the company received an outstanding achievement award from the Department of Defense.

A graduate of Rutgers, Smith received an M.B.A. from New York University. He is a Certified Public Accountant.

Contributing writer Coleman Sullivan conducted the following interview.

You've often said that the Financial Vice-President serves as the "business officer" of the University. What are the basic responsibilities of your position here?

The responsibilities of a business officer, in a broad sense, include most of the services that assist the academic effort — the main reason for everybody's being here. That starts with seeing that we have enough money to buy the capital items we need, to buy the equipment we need — the library books and things like that — pay the faculty adequate salaries and see to it that we have financial continuity. It is not to make a profit or to husband



great reserves. It is, rather, to have adequate reserves to accomplish the former, which is continuity.

I think the financial or business officer must be intimately familiar with the non-financial problems within the university. Examples would be the size of the student body, demographic forecasts, adequacy of academic facilities. Is Boston College aiming at the student-faculty ratio consistent with all our other goals? I think it would be inappropriate to have commitments to the community, the general student population, or faculty that are inconsistent with the way we staffed them. It's one thing to have a goal to have excellence in education and another to have inappropriate student-

faculty ratios, or inadequate facilities for the academic effort. Everything has to be balanced. The business officer should be as concerned about that as the academic officer.

The business officer also has to ensure that the University maintains very, very good relations with all levels of government — federal, state, city and the local towns. How they perceive us will help or hinder us in the long, and short, run. Simple things like traffic lights or traffic problems, adequate support from police and fire departments — all the way up to federal programs that help student aid or provide funds for capital construction or for research and academic efforts that we think are great.

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When we felt there was a nursing shortage in the United States, we were able to convince the federal government that grants should be given to encourage nursing education. That's the way it works. Now, they're being cut back. Education now, we see at the high school level, is declining in terms of the number of students and therefore it's hard to convince the government, even ourselves, that we should get federal or state aid to help generate more teachers, if, in fact, there's a surplus.

The University has to be part of society. It has to react to it and with it, help move it, understand where it ought to go and supply this kind of constant ongoing information. The financial or business officer, within that framework, advises against capital investments that are imprudent — that we don't overbuild student housing just because we have an ephemeral need — that we don't work from year to year with no long-term commitments.

The non-profit nature of this institution must offer some interesting challenges for a business officer. How would you compare managing in a profit-making company with managing in a non-profit organization.

If you take profit-making firms that are service organizations, the relationship would be almost one-to-one. Obviously, it's a little different in a place that manufactures a product for profit, or in a mercantile business or in a retail business. I think the goals are, in the broadest sense, very similar. They are trying to identify the aspects of the business that have some impact on the long term and setting up some kind of management scheme to achieve objectives.

Financial planning implements academic planning, physical building planning and so forth, demonstrates in advance whether you can finance something. If you have the control necessary to maintain the expense budget once you set it, and if you have the control necessary to achieve the income goal, once you've set it, and if you're able to predict this with some precision, where you want it to be, and then achieve those goals, you've got the basic formula for the financial management of a college.

Enrollment obviously plays an important part in the well-being of this institution. How has the technique of "enrollment management" — the effort to keep enrollment at a level consistent with market conditions and University policy — helped you?

The introduction of enrollment management, on a professional level and coordinated with the executive vice-president, makes my job easier because that's a major facet of the operation that we can depend on and budget. I monitor it and have not had to worry that we're going to have great ups and downs in enrollment.

When we publish this constant growth of applications and report it to agencies like Standard & Poor and Moody's, they feel that Boston College has a high probability of maintaining its chunk of the student market

Enrollment management also gives me information that I can show to people who want to lend us money — an historical record that shows that we have done something right, either with this academic effort we're describing, or how we sell the school, or how we've managed to maintain relatively low tuitions and at the same time build facilities that are attractive to the students, or for whatever reason — I suspect that it's a composite of all the above — that we're getting a lot of applications in here.

When we publish this constant growth of applications and report it to the agencies like Standard & Poor and Moody's, they feel that Boston College has a high probability of maintaining our chunk of the student market, and they know that all the colleges, especially the independent colleges, are highly sensitive to drops in enrollment. So this is a great feature, which makes Boston College attractive to the financial community.

Another feature that appeals to the financial community is the elimination of

our budget deficits. We're also constantly increasing the favorable ratios of cash in the hands of the trustees available to pay off debts. As the ratio gets higher and higher, the dollar amount of this increases in terms of the number of years' coverage we have of the debt service. This also gives the financial community a confidence factor.



Now, we're entering into a whole new building campaign, which is looking toward a great capital contribution — this becomes a keystone to our "saleability" to the financial community. In addition to that aspect, the building plan will give us a more balanced, attractive college. When the students look here, among all their other choices, they are going to see that we have an impressive library and theater, as we now have a quality recreation complex.

I understand from Jack Maguire (Dean of Admissions, Records and Financial Aid) that last year 85 percent of the applicants wanted housing. This number is now up to 87, moving toward 88 percent. This means that the decision to build student housing might be a critical decision in the mid-1980s when the number of high school students is shrinking — that we'll be in a better position financially because we'd have a higher degree of assurance that we'd be able to maintain full undergraduate population. This strengthens the probability of maintaining quality academic staff and programs.

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Much has been said about the problems private institutions of higher learning face in maintaining quality and still not placing unacceptable financial burdens on students from low- and middle-income families. What is your function in meeting this problem?

We have to recognize financial aid problems that students have, and we have to use every innovative idea we can to determine how we can best help finance the students' education. Up until now, Boston College has taken a tack of operating with a frugal operating budget, assuring ourselves by good control of administrative personnel that we won't become overloaded with administrative costs. At the same time, we want to be able to supply the maximum administrative efficiency to the faculty and the other prime movers so that they're not wasting their time, instead of doing their academic thing.

We still need endowment funds. Why? Because the earnings on those endowment funds go into scholarships, or "tuition remission" as we call it here, which

helps certain highly-qualified students to come here who otherwise couldn't afford to come. And who might not qualify for the government's financial aid, because their families are at the middle-income level or even higher. Just because a family is middle-income or higher doesn't mean that parents can afford to send their son or daughter here.

We've walked the middle line in terms of tuition and aid. Others take the view of charging a much, much higher tuition, but then giving out a great deal more financial aid out of school funds. What that represents, to a great extent, is a redistribution of funds by the persons who can afford it to the persons who can't. Boston College and all other independent colleges do this to some extent — it's just

We still need endowment funds. Why? Because the earnings on those endowment funds go into scholarships

a question of whether we have the school consisting of just very, very rich children, very, very economically-deprived children and very few in the middle-income group.

We think our pricing policy is geared to the middle-income group. To a modest extent, they subsidize the lower-income groups through tuition remission, which is also modest here in terms of total dollars relative to other independent colleges.

Other independent colleges that have anywhere from 30 to 40 to 45 percent of their total operating budget funded from gifts or earnings on prior years' endowment have a slightly different problem from us because they're using prior generations' gifts to finance lower-income groups and to keep general tuition lower than it would otherwise be. In our case, we have the current generation of parents and students somewhat subsidizing the current generation of lower-income students. To that extent, this represents a kind of marketing policy, just as General Motors might have one that's slightly different from Ford or Volkswagen.

The New Heights Advancement Campaign seeks to raise about \$7 million in pledges in the next two years to reach its goal of \$21 million. What role do the funds generated by the Campaign play in making the University more healthy financially and in alleviating the pressures on the budget?

The budgeting effort for '79-'80 was a really tough process. During the last couple of years, we solved the budget problems to some extent by increasing the number of undergraduate students, and therefore tuition income. The University has decided to level out at the present size, 8,300 undergraduates. The budgeting process is more difficult now because we want to increase faculty incomes consistent with the growth in median family income and, at the same time, we want the tuition increase to stay within that growth. Now, somewhere in the process, we find that energy costs, scholarship money, and fringe benefits are increasing at a rate in excess of median family income. It is very difficult and takes a great deal of effort on the Budget Committee's part and on the executive vice-president's part to realign priorities and make changes to accomplish this task.

Superimposed on all that is the great effort going on in the New Heights Campaign to bring in operating and endowment funds that will assure a higher percentage of the revenue in future budgets coming from sources other than students. That's the big problem here — we have to increase the percentage of money that goes into the operating budget from sources other than students.

Current plans, from the capital campaign's standpoint, are that we will be able to say to the students, and to the world, that when we make capital investments for auxiliary buildings — that would be dormitories and dining facilities — we would expect that they would be paid for directly by the users. We have other buildings that we classify as educational and general, such as the theater, and library. We expect that the money for those projects will always come from donors, from the development campaign. We can't wait for the gifts to come in because we need the buildings today. We also know that the costs of construction are going up between 15 and 20 percent a year, so it's wise to build early.

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The construction cost of those buildings that are educational and general will be paid for (as the principal of the mortgages) from the gifts that we will receive and set aside to assure these principal payments will not become a burden on the operating budget, that is, will not have to be paid for by tuition.

In addition to that, any other gifts that come in from the New Heights Campaign that are in excess of commitment to the current year's operating budget and these principal payments would help defray the incremental operating costs, such as books, additional librarians for the research library, custodians and other workers required for the theater, and any other incremental costs like heat, maintenance and repairs that are predictable with new buildings. That's where there's a great need for the development campaign, that is, other than capital. The capital campaign is very, very much required in our long-term financial planning, our long-term physical planning and our long-term academic goals.

You spoke of "innovative" ideas to improve efficiency and management. Could you give us some examples of such ideas and policies implemented here?

One of Boston College's goals is to account fully for costs and still break even on auxiliary services, room and board, infirmary and bookstore. I think you'd agree that it wouldn't be fair if you had a building that you estimated would last 50 years, and had a 20-year mortgage, to charge students for debt service only for 20 years and have it free to the students the last 30. We observed in contracts accounting that the government allows depreciation as a valid cost. We decided to institute the use of depreciation accounting. It became just one less calculation we had to make separately for the government and it allowed us to determine our own real cost. Now, any time we consider using an outside vendor or sub-contractor to perform some function on campus, we can compare *full* cost—not just what appears to be out-of-pocket cash at that moment.

Take the bookstore, for example. The space the bookstore occupies costs us money. We have to heat it, we have to maintain it, we have to paint it occasionally and we have to repair it. To consider

those factors as cost puts us in a better position to compare the cost of running a facility ourselves with the fees charged by outside firms who bid to take it over as a sub-contract activity. We find that we can hire qualified managers and give it all the support from our own support services, and do a better job running most of these things ourselves, both in terms of better service and less overall cost.

The capital campaign is very, very much required in our long-term financial planning, our long-term physical planning and our long-term academic goals

Many places, most places I suspect, have outside contracts for food and bookstore services. We did it ourselves. You can even have security and custodial work done by third parties. We don't. I think we have better control, we build a better *esprit de corps*. We hope to have the auxiliary personnel feel as much for the University as the students, the faculty and the administrators, not just that they're here as hired hands.

I talked earlier about our similarity with industry. One of the things that was an obvious *disparity* with industry was that there were no clear-cut job titles or descriptions here a few years ago. Institutional researchers measure the productivity of the faculty. Everybody ran to do that because there were nice quantitative data available. But unless you have a job description and, at the beginning of the year, set goals and objectives for the administrator in a particular job, you cannot know at the end of the year whether he or she had achieved them. So we instituted the job titles and descriptions.

If you're going to encourage this kind of planning and achievement, it's fair to reimburse the people commensurate with the task. The studies we conducted to establish salary classifications for administrators and staff set some fair recognition for the relative value of the various positions, and realigned the salaries. Within that, we instituted the annual merit in-



crease system and performance analysis, where the employee has the opportunity to learn what his immediate supervisor feels about his work. If the employee disagrees with the evaluation, he can set forth the reasons he disagrees. If the next year he does an excellent job, he'd be rewarded financially.

The budgets have been so tight that the amount of dollars in these rewards have been nominal, but by the same token if you received even a one percent increment above what was the norm you had the advantage of knowing that you were doing well.



William Cain, '70

'Part of my view of religion is that the act of creativity is a major part of religious activity'

In the bowels of the Horticultural Hall in downtown Boston lie the offices of the Boston Shakespeare Company (B.S.C.). In what seemed to be the reception room, a young woman was typing, an intense-looking young man was drawing staging sketches on a slim board that folded out of the wall, and two young women — one seated on a desk and the other in a chair — were talking. There were no chairs for guests. There were no doors visible except for the one we had just come through. The walls were makeshift partitions of particleboard. Somewhere nearby, a guitar was being played. Somewhere nearby, sewing machines were chattering. The din was formidable.

William Cain, '70, artistic director and founder of the B.S.C., entered. "Puck," said the typecaster in us. Cain was thin and wiry. A good proportion of his thin blonde hair lay crescentoid across his brow and pointed over his right ear in the direction from which he'd come. He looked harried and pleased.

He escorted us behind a partition, where there were some chairs. We were further away from the typist and the talkers, but closer to the guitar and the sewing machines.

"So, what is it you'd like to know?" he asked.

Perhaps some history, we ventured.

"We'd better go upstairs," he said, "things are kind of crazy down here. How about a tour?"

Cain set a swift pace. We passed the guitar player and somebody who was kneeling over a costume. We entered the dressing room. The dressing tables were of unfinished wood. A ping-pong table stood in a corner, half-covered with something purple — maybe a curtain, maybe Hamlet's cape — we didn't have a chance to inspect; we were out of the dressing room and moving upstairs — moving toward the stage door and what seemed to be the entire inner works of a piano. Cain thrummed it in passing and then turned and delivered a wallop to a piece of sheet metal that hung on the

other side of the door, and so announced, we entered an empty theater.

The theater was a lovely place: high-ceilinged, large-windowed. Plush theater seats — 320 of them — rose in tiers to the entrances above. The stage itself was of the classic, tri-leveled, Shakespearean variety. Cracks in the floor of the stage revealed the presence of trapdoors through which Yorick's skull would be handed; down which the three witches would disappear.

Six months ago, neither stage nor seats existed except in the imaginations of members of the B.S.C. They were built — "by dint," said Cain, "of frantic non-stop work" — between July 5, 1978, when the B.S.C. first moved into these quarters, and September 15, 1978, when it opened its season with a performance of *Hamlet*.

"In this Company," Cain said later, "if we start to talk about building a castle, we just go and build it."

Cain took a seat on the floor of the stage beside a Victorian desk, part of the set for *Twelfth Night*.

He explained that the company was giving *Twelfth Night* a Victorian music hall setting because there was so much music in the play, and in Victorian times, music was taken seriously.

"One thing I'm proud of," he said, "is that it's obvious we're theater people; that our money is up here and not down in the offices."

He then was still for the first time since we'd met him.

History, we reminded him.

"The Boston Shakespeare Company," he said, "came into existence five years ago. I had worked with a large number of theater people in Boston and felt it was time to get everyone together to start a repertory company. I felt, and still feel, that developing a company is the way to grow in theater. I sent out 90 inquiries and I got back 90 responses saying, 'Name the day and we'll be there.' We begged, borrowed and stole \$11,000 and that was the beginning."

Here Cain interrupted history to tell

our photographer that he had a very good speaking voice. The photographer blushed and admitted he had done a few walk-ons in high school and had played Ebenezer Scrooge in sixth grade.

The B.S.C., for the first four years of its existence, occupied space in a Back Bay church. There were problems: restrictions on rehearsal time, interruptions.

"You never knew," Cain said, "when someone was going to walk in and say, 'Hey, quiet down.'"

We asked how many of the Bard's plays the B.S.C. had performed, and Cain rattled off a list.

"We put on *Pericles* in our first year," he said. "How many Shakespeare companies do you know that put on *Pericles* in their first year?"

For Cain, the Shakespeare repertoire serves as a focus for the company — "a subject," he said, "within which we can grow. For instance, we put on *Comedy of Errors* recently and that was good comic stuff; and then we put on . . . *Shrew* and that was kind of a satisfying play, and now we've got *Twelfth Night* going and that's the culmination of both, funny and satisfying."

Aside from Shakespeare, the B.S.C. has also mounted productions of *Robin Hood*, *Antigone* and *The Miser*.

"We see ourselves as a popular theater," said Cain, "not a cultural bauble. This summer, we'll be putting on something called 'Shakespeare's World,' in which two people will do all of Shakespeare's work in 12 minutes." Cain then bowed his head over his arm in the classic position of anguish and howled very effectively.

Cain, who performed at B.C. under the direction of Joseph Larkin, S.J., and Paul Marcoux, holds a master's degree in theater from Tufts and has worked in various administrative and acting capacities on each coast. He considers the two years he spent studying mime at the Herbert Berghof Studios in New York his most important developmental experience in theater.

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"Mime," he said, "is the backbone of my theory of theater. Mime gives you simple ways to enter a scene. It teaches you the meaning of 'presence.' It teaches you what is a dramatic moment. I am not a Stanislavski method-type of director or actor. I need movement."

Except briefly, Cain had not stopped moving since we met him. His arms and hands illustrated. His legs set up a continual syncopation.

Cain, as it happens, is a Jesuit as well as a theater person.

"The Jesuits," he said, "are going through a major period of rediscovery, and I've been fortunate enough to come along at a time when I can be given the freedom to experiment. Integrating religion and theater has been a life work for me for the past 15 years.

"Part of my view of religion is that the act of creativity is a major part of religious activity. The Bible begins with creation, and the theme runs right through the New Testament. Creating a community is, of course, also part of religious activity."

Community is the soul of the B.S.C. While we talked with Cain, a tall young man came in and began to sweep the theater in preparation for that evening's performance.

"Here's our public relations director," said Cain, and indeed, the fellow came over, broom in hand, and proved himself to be a cheery and efficient dispenser of P.R. information. Later, while perusing a playbill, we discovered that this young man also played three parts in *Hamlet* and, later in the season, would be directing a play.

Cain, too, wears many hats. Aside from being overall artistic director, he understudies parts and directed the recent performance of *Hamlet*. When last we saw him, he was assuming yet another role.

"Don't forget to buy your tickets on the way out," he called from the stage.

Ben Birnbaum



Adele Dalsimer

Boston College's resident enthusiast in Anglo-Irish literature

A large etching of the Norman tower that was William Butler Yeats' beloved home near Ballylee, Galway, hung on one wall, a colorful montage of handsome Dublin Georgian doorways on another. A huge photograph of James Joyce was propped against a bookcase. The visitors' chairs were a bright leaf green and rested on a shaggy rug. Otherwise, this was simply one of the usually Spartan, fairly generous "cells" that are faculty offices in Carney. The occupant of Room 439 was a slight, animated woman whose dark brown hair gleamed chestnut in the sunlight.

Adele Dalsimer, Associate Professor of English, had a full day ahead of her. It was not one of her class days, but polite students kept stopping at the door to ask when they might discuss topics for papers. The phone rang. The calligrapher designing the poster for a program called "Celtic Connections" was at the Museum of Fine Arts and wanted to know the fastest way *sans* automobile to get to campus. There was a question, also, of a time when calligrapher and English professor could meet with Pamela Berger, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts. Prof. Berger was teaching on the Newton Campus. No, it couldn't be late afternoon, because this was the eve of Yom Kippur and the professor of Anglo-Irish literature had to transform herself into wife and mother well before sunset.

There was no sense of hurry, only of excitement, as we proceeded to the interview. The basic question was: How did a person born in the borough of Queens in the shadow of World War II become Boston College's resident enthusiast in Anglo-Irish literature and the whole range of Irish culture?

"Basically, it's a result of being here at Boston College," Prof. Dalsimer said. "I

majored in English at Mount Holyoke with no intention of doing anything with it. I thought I was going to law school. I was even admitted to law school. Then I went to Hunter College instead and took a master's degree."

The future was perhaps foreshadowed in Prof. Dalsimer's master's degree paper, which dealt with those two (Irish) public men and men of letters, Jonathan Swift and William Butler Yeats.

Marriage along the way to Dr. James Dalsimer, a psychiatrist now in charge of the psychiatric emergency and outpatient service at Cambridge Hospital, brought her to Boston in the mid-'60s. Having produced daughter Jennifer, now 14, she taught part-time in the humanities division at B.U. Next, as a doctoral degree candidate at Yale, she studied the Romantic poets under Harold Bloom (awarded an honorary degree here in 1973).

"I wonder what Harold Bloom thinks of what I'm doing now!"

(Given her enchantment with James Joyce, in whose work she offers two courses, one is mischievously tempted to call her "Blooms girl.")

The Dalsimers, now a quadrivium including Joshua, returned to Boston in 1969, just as opportunities for young instructors in English began to be thin on the ground.

"There were only two entry-level possibilities." (She had not then completed her thesis.) "One was at Boston State. I knew I didn't want to teach at Boston State. The other was here. At first, of course, I took my turn teaching the surveys and then the department chairman let me do a course that was a survey of Irish literature, beginning with Edmund Spenser. I was *astonished* that there was no course in Irish literature at Boston Col-

lege. Then, in 1972, my husband and I spent a month in Ireland and I was really hooked."

A Radcliffe Institute fellowship in 1972-73 and a 1974 faculty summer fellowship from the University allowed her to deepen her knowledge of modern Anglo-Irish literature.

How did she define Anglo-Irish literature?

"You could say it's literature in English written by Irishmen — but I make the distinction between writers like Yeats, Synge, Joyce and O'Casey for whom Ireland was the central inspiration and those writers such as Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw, who were Irish-born but for whom Ireland was not the focus of the imagination."

Yeats & Co. are the four pillars of a course Prof. Dalsimer offers on the Irish literary tradition.

One could infer that she would also like to give a course on the Irish short story.

"The short story, after all, was brought to perfect pitch in Ireland, perhaps because of the oral tradition," Prof. Dalsimer said. She mentioned, among others, Sean O'Faolain, Frank O'Connor and Edna O'Brien. The interviewer laughed and reminded the professor just who had won the most recent Nobel Prize for literature. We digressed for a few moments, talking about possible parallels between the experience of Isaac Bashevis Singer and the Irish authors.

Prof. Dalsimer brought the interview back to her current absorbing interest in the interaction of literature, politics and the whole socio-economic history of Ireland. The National Endowment for the Humanities had made her a grant to study the political aspects of the Abbey Theater, a project of which she said, "I

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thought it would take five years and now I think it will take 15."

Prof. Dalsimer and Kevin O'Neill, an Irish scholar in the history department, now teach a course entitled "The Politics and Literature of Irish Freedom." With Prof. Berger, Profs. Dalsimer and O'Neill regard their related courses as the nucleus of an "Irish studies program" and stoutly maintain that Boston College students would undertake to study Gaelic if given the chance.

Every turn in the conversation, however, brought Prof. Dalsimer back to her excitement over the Museum of Fine Arts exhibition of "The Treasures of Irish Art," which was then about to begin and has recently concluded.

"Something my students are going to be able to appreciate," she said, "is the relationship between these beautiful objects and Irish literature — the elaborate configurations in the Book of Kells, for instance, and Joyce's language in *Finnegans Wake*. I want to watch that dynamic."

The involvement with the once-in-a-lifetime museum event is, however, only the tip of the iceberg. The dream is to enrich and expand Irish studies at Boston College, to be able to help expand the University's already enviable Irish Collections, to bring to campus such current Irish authors — for more than a single lecture — as Brian Moore, Edna O'Brien, Sean O'Faolain and Seumas Heaney.

The promised half-hour had turned into an hour-and-a-half and the day had just begun. The interviewer got up to shake hands and depart.

Said the professor: "My mother has just finished *Trinity*. I think she's beginning to understand my fascination."

Marylou Buckley



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"I love my life," said Margaret Dever, director of B.C.'s Programs for Women, "but I don't think it makes very good copy." Not an auspicious start for an interview, but, then, not an accurate assessment of the subject either.

Margaret Dever was born and raised in Monte Vista, Col., "a small town located in a valley ringed by the Rockies, a place of sky and mountains. We had to travel through a mountain pass to reach the world outside." She remembers it as a wonderful and beautiful place to grow up.

One of her early trips through that mountain pass and away from home was for a visit to England and her father's beloved Isle of Man. Later she left Monte Vista for Canon (pronounced "canyon") City, Col., and the Academy of the Royal Gorge, a Catholic girls' boarding school and not, as the name might suggest, a training ground for those who would emulate Henry VIII's eating habits. It was at boarding school that Dever decided she wanted "to be a lady as ladies are in the novels." Whatever the seriousness or intention of that decision, it is worth noting that "lady" is a term people commonly use in describing Margaret Dever.

What brought her from Colorado to Boston?

"That goes back to my senior year at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan.," she explained. "I was editor of the college literary magazine, and I decided that I wanted to do an interview with Joe Dever, who had just won the *Yank* short story competition. I tracked him down to a base in Denver and made contact through a friend at the base. He agreed to do the interview, and I stopped at Denver on my way home for Christmas vacation."

Evidently the college editor was not the least intimidated by a subject who was featured in four national magazines when she first met him. She got not only her interview with one of B.C.'s most famous

Margaret Dever

'Lady' is a term people commonly use in describing her

alumni-authors, but also his permission to publish the prize-winning "Fifty Missions" in her magazine and, less than a year later, a proposal of marriage as well.

Joe's peripatetic career eventually came full-circle and brought the Devers back to his Boston roots via way stations like Milwaukee.

"I actually enjoyed Milwaukee," she said. "Exciting and interesting people were always passing through on the lecture circuit. I can remember having dinner with Evelyn Waugh there. He invited me to come to tea whenever I got to England, but I never had the opportunity to accept his invitation."

In 1962, Dever earned a master's degree from Harvard and joined the faculty of Newton College of the Sacred Heart as coordinator of the "Study of Western Culture," an interdisciplinary course she directed for 10 years, and that remains to this day a kind of legend among Newton alumnae.

Bringing together history, philosophy, art, political science and other disciplines, the "Study of Western Culture" covered events from pre-history to the 20th century.

"If I had known ahead of time the amount of work it involved, I might not have had the courage to do it, but it was a marvelous experience for me," Dever said. "The course provided a large, connected framework for the students' learning, and every spring the sophomores came alive. It all came together, and they saw the patterns. To see that happen was rewarding and exciting, and I'm happy for the Newton students who had the experience."

By 1972 Dever had shifted gears and turned her talents to developing and directing "Programs for Women," a combination of counseling services, seminars, internships and other programs devoted to the continuing education of women.

"Our primary purpose," the director said "is to provide an opportunity to study and learn in a special atmosphere,

in an environment for learning, and in a way not possible within the traditional format."

Since the merger of Boston College and Newton College, Programs for Women has become a division of the University and has taken on new significance.

"As a part of Boston College," Dever said, "Programs for Women makes a statement about the University administration's commitment to a visible support of women. It also provides another way for the University to reach out to the community, and it is another means for re-educating the lingering all-male image of Boston College in this era of full co-education."

Given her background and experience, her interests and responsibilities, does Dever consider herself a feminist?

"I'm not an angry feminist by any means," she replied. "I don't want to use my energy that way. I think that men have been as much trained in their attitudes as women and that we have to work things out together. I suppose I'm an advocate of women's education more than anything else."

Does she attribute that focus to her Newton College experience?

"Definitely," she said, "particularly to those nuns — what fantastic people — educated, civilized, competent. And to the Newton students, too."

To clarify that point, Dever told about a visiting lecturer, an expert on Voltaire, who made it clear in the course of his lecture that he did not have a very high opinion of the young women he was addressing or of their institution.

"He obviously had some strange ideas about small, Catholic women's colleges — the type of person who brings out the worst in me," Dever said. But then came the question period at the end of the lecture, she said, and the visitor was apparently surprised by the quality and thoughtfulness of the students' comments and questions. When he returned the following year, he began his lecture

with an apology for having underestimated his audience of the previous year.

In spite of a work schedule that frequently goes well beyond the traditional 9-to-5 workday and sometimes into weekends, Dever finds time to pursue interests beyond her professional responsibilities. Periodic visits to New York City, for instance, are her favorite technique for recharging her batteries.

"I almost always make it a point to visit the Metropolitan Museum while I am there," she said. "It helps remind me that human beings have done some marvelous things, and that's a great cure for depression."

She is an active member of St. Ignatius parish in Chestnut Hill, where she serves regularly as a lector. She particularly enjoys the special liturgy for the University community celebrated at St. Ignatius each Sunday.

She also finds pleasure in small things, like the birds who visit the birch grove outside her office window on the Newton Campus. She recently bought a feeder for her windowsill in the hope that it would tempt the feathered visitors closer.

Her greatest interest, though, is people, and chief among the people in Margaret Dever's life are her children and grandchildren. At the end of the interview on which this article is based, in fact, she took great delight in showing off a very colorful, hand-decorated sheet that was a Christmas present from her seven-year-old grandson who lives in Hawaii. On it he portrayed events of his life and such current interests as *Star Wars*. Incorporated into the design was a large inscription that read, "I love you, Miss Margaret." She explained that all her grandchildren call her Miss Margaret.

"I suppose if Miss Lillian can be Miss Lillian, I can be Miss Margaret," she said. Indeed she can be, indeed she is Miss Margaret.

Jim McGahay

Letters

Kudos

To the editor:

Your November issue was an enjoyable one, especially M.B.'s profile of Helen Landreth. She is a wonderful person. I enjoyed her talks and tours of the then-infant Irish Collection, when I helped Fr. Terrence Connolly with the Francis Thompson Collection.

Having done years of voluntary participation in many fields, I more than enjoyed David H. Smith's *The Impact of the Voluntary Sector on Society*.

Keep up the good work.

Leo R. O'Neill, '62

Winchendon

To the editor:

Congratulations on the November issue of *Boston College Magazine*. This is a fine alumni publication and I enjoyed reading all of the articles, especially those by David H. Smith and Susan Sperling.

Keep up the fine work.

Karen Wolk Feinstein, M.S.W. '69

Managing Editor

The Urban & Social Change Review
Chestnut Hill

To the editor:

Let me congratulate you and the staff on the excellent content and style of the November *Boston College Magazine*. There was something in it for everyone. I myself enjoyed the pieces on the volunteers and on the library and the "Gallery" section.

Compliments all around.

William J. Leonard, S.J. '31, M.A. '32
New York

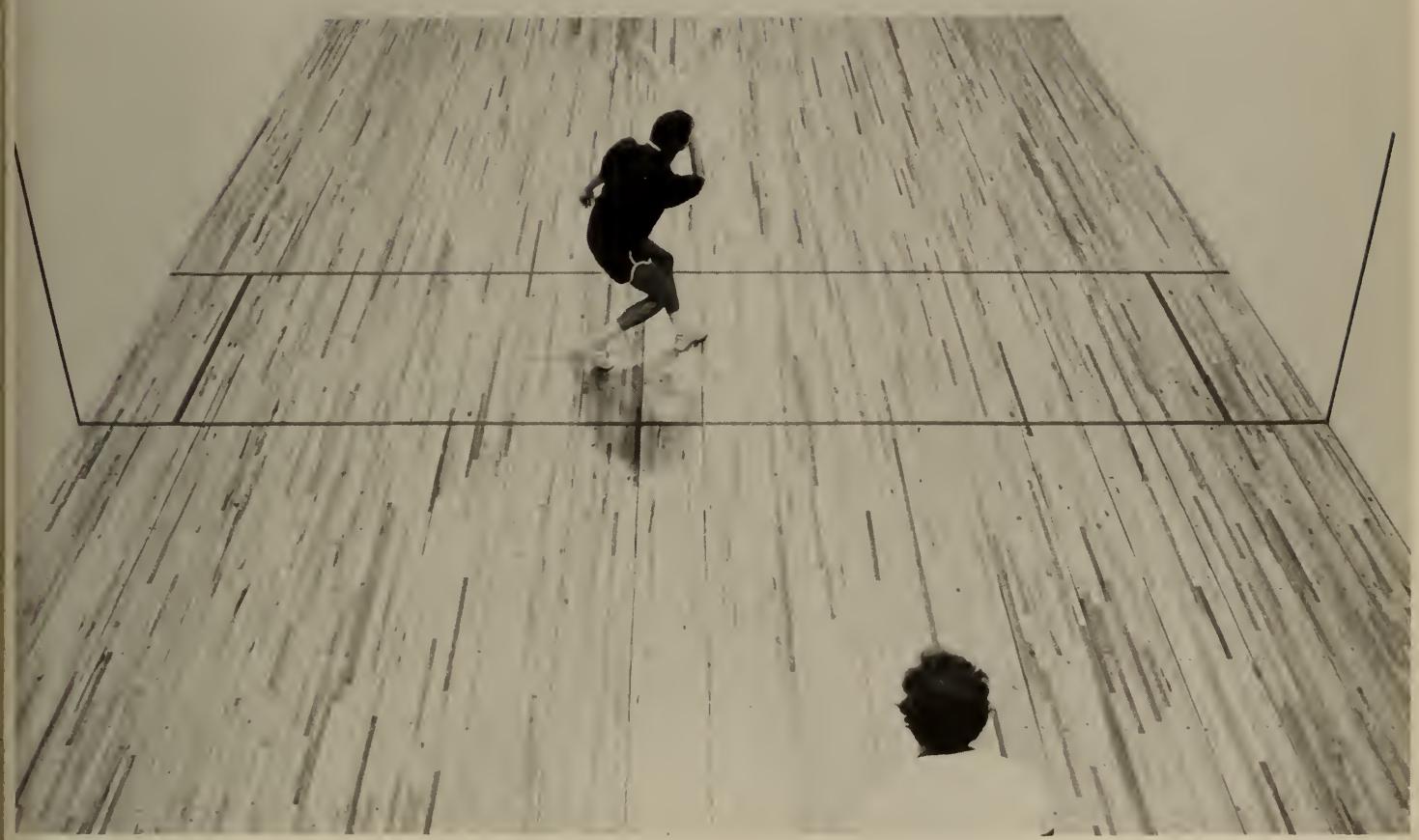
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We'd like to reserve this page for you.

If you have an opinion about something presented in an article in this magazine, or about the magazine itself, send us a letter and you'll see it printed in the next issue right here.

Please sign your name to your letter. We will, however, print only initials if you so desire. For several reasons, we reserve the right to select letters for publication and to edit some letters, but editing will be indicated.

We write to you three times a year through this magazine. We hope you'll write to us when you can.



Racquetball at the Recreation Complex



Bob Cousy, B.C.'s most successful basketball coach, was not the demonstrative sort, although this photo of him on the sidelines at a game in Boston Garden certainly belies that characterization. There is no question, however, about Cousy's success. In six years here, 1963-69, Cousy's teams won 117 games and lost 38, for a 75.5 winning percentage. His teams went to three National Invitational Tournaments and to two N.C.A.A. tournaments, reaching the Eastern regional finals and the "final eight" in 1967. There's another basketball coach at B.C. now who has begun to light fires behind the eyes of Eagles basketball fans. A look at Tom Davis, page 18.

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